Writing the Ten-Minute Play Syllabus

Instructor
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Quarter: Winter
Start – end date: January 11th – February 29th
Session day/time: Thursdays, 6:00 - 8:30 pm
Course Code and Section: WRIT22401 24W1

Course Overview

Ten-Minute Play Festivals are happening all over the country. In this course, we will explore the fundamentals needed to write solid short plays with compelling characters in complex situations where our people find they are in conflict with others and perhaps themselves. We’ll talk about how to use text as well as subtext in our dialogue. We’ll also discuss ways to make sure our stage directions are clear, concise and active. Finally we’ll examine how other writers have achieved success with this abbreviated art form by focusing on their use of character, time, place, plot, structure, language and theme.

Participants should bring in a short play that is no more than ten pages in length. It is absolutely fine for participants to then rewrite this short play after having received comments and bring it into the next class. It is also absolutely fine to take the criticism and keep moving forward with another short play. In the past, participants have often worked on more than one play at a time. It is not unusual for participants to develop two or three plays or even more over the course of our eight sessions.

Everyone should give some thought to who should read what.

Everyone should be ready to listen.

And everyone should be prepared to present something in each and every one of our eight sessions. We may not always get to everyone’s work, but we will try. Even if a participant has nothing to present on a particular week, they will find it helpful to attend as they may benefit from comments that are made about the work of others and their own comments will almost certainly contribute to the conversation.

Recommended texts


Take Ten II: More 10-Minute Plays, edited by Eric Lane & Nina Shengold
Accessing remote courses
Remote courses are taught through our Canvas platform. Approximately two weeks before your class begins, we will add you to your canvas site using the email address you provided at the time of registration. An invitation will then be sent to that email. Click the “Get Started” button in the email to begin the Canvas login process. For step-by-step instructions, please visit https://grahamschool.uchicago.edu/academic-programs/online/learning-resources/liberal-arts. Once you’ve created your Canvas account, you can access any Graham School canvas course for which you are registered at: https://canvas.uchicago.edu.

Accessibility information
Student Disability Services (SDS) works to provide resources, support and accommodations for all students with disabilities and works to remove physical and attitudinal barriers, which may prevent their full participation in the University community. Students that would like to request accommodations should contact SDS in advance of the first class session at 773.702.6000 or disabilities@uchicago.edu.

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The University and its faculty are committed to creating a safer and more inclusive learning environment for all students. At the University, all faculty, staff, graduate student instructors, and teaching assistants are considered “Individuals with Reporting Responsibilities” and are required to let the University’s Title IX Coordinator know about any disclosures they receive from students about experiences of sexual misconduct (including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, and sexual harassment). This includes disclosures of experiences that happened before their time at the University. This is to ensure that all students who have experienced sexual misconduct receive support, options, and information about their rights and resources. Students are not obligated to respond to this outreach, and this will not generate a report to law enforcement.
For more information, please see this handout for students as well as the University’s Policy on Harassment, Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct and Policy on Title IX Sexual Harassment. You can also reach out directly for services and support from the Office for Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Support by emailing titleix@uchicago.edu.
If you, or another student you know, wishes to speak to a confidential resource who does not have this reporting responsibility, please contact the Sexual Assault Dean on Call through the UChicago Safe App or at 773.834-HELP.

Questions? Contact Zoë Eisenman at zme1@uchicago.edu.