Writing for Emotional Impact
Writer’s Studio, Spring 2020

COURSE INFORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COURSE TITLE</th>
<th>CODE &amp; SECTION</th>
<th>LENGTH OF COURSE</th>
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<tr>
<td>Writing for Emotional Impact</td>
<td>WRIT52611 20S1</td>
<td>6 weeks</td>
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<tr>
<th>COURSE SCHEDULE</th>
<th>CLASS LOCATION: Online</th>
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<td>DAYS: Tuesdays, May 5- June 9</td>
<td>You will receive instructions on how to join the class within approximately two days of your registration.</td>
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<td>TIMES: 1:30-4pm</td>
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<tr>
<th>INSTRUCTOR</th>
<th>EMAIL:</th>
<th>GRAHAM SCHOOL INFORMATION</th>
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<tr>
<td>Susan Hubbard</td>
<td><a href="mailto:susan.hubbard3@gmail.com">susan.hubbard3@gmail.com</a></td>
<td>PHONE: 773.702.1722</td>
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GRAHAM SCHOOL INFORMATION

WEBSITE: https://grahamschool.uchicago.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Audiences watch movies and read fiction hoping to be blown away; to go on emotional journeys so powerful they linger in the mind as lived experience. Learn to bind audience to story by building strong character identification and skillful story catharsis. A top screenplay and a novel will be used to provide examples and inform our discussion. Writers should be prepared to complete in-class and homework assignments and read, critique, and support each other’s work. This class is appropriate for writers of all levels.

The intent of this class is to interrogate and challenge the notion that character arc is controlled primarily by external character goals and plot events. To this end, we’ll examine and apply techniques writers can use to bind audiences to their stories by letting them into the emotions that pre-exist, accompany, underlie and fuel character goals, decisions and actions, emotions that demand transformation and change equally, and arguably more than, objective, external character goals.

REQUIRED TEXTS

2. *Crazy Heart*, 2009 movie and screenplay starring Jeff Bridges, Maggie Gyllenhaal, Colin Farrell; written and directed by Scott Cooper; based on a novel by Thomas Cobb. Email the instructor after you have registered to receive a script link.
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<tr>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>READINGS &amp; ASSIGNMENTS</th>
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| **Week 1** | Prior to class watch the 2009 movie, *Crazy Heart*. Email the instructor after you have registered to receive a link to the screenplay.  
Prior to class read *The Mermaid Chair* by Sue Monk Kidd (332 pp.)  
**TOPICS:**  
- Audience experience of stories  
- Emotional vs. external plot  
- Humans, factored; establishing underlying character drivers  
- Pitting purpose vs. need  
- Achieving the goal AND transforming the self |
| **Week 2** |  
- Centering your audience in the here and now of your character’s experience  
- Enabling audience access to your character’s inner life  
- Maximizing stakes and loss  
- Using archetypes to generate story and scene material |
| **Week 3** |  
- Community, values, risk, and refuge; worlds and characters that invite us in  
- Entwining public and private stakes  
- Unleashing external and internal struggles that beg solutions  
- Deploying three key events and a harbinger |
| **Week 4** |  
- Evoking the unnamable  
- Metaphor and analogy at your service  
- Working the distractions |
| **Week 5** |  
- Exploiting human inconsistencies and polarities  
- Reframing overarching dramatic questions and immediate scene questions  
- Recasting scenes as character and story shifts |
Week 6
June 9

- Deploying danger, risk and surprise
- Taking the moral high ground; driving home your themes

*This syllabus is a summary of course objectives and content, not a contract. All information in this syllabus is subject to change, with sufficient advance notice provided by the instructor.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE
As we may be addressing controversial topics in our class discussions, we expect students to be respectful and considerate of others.

DISABILITY INFORMATION
The Graham School of Continuing Liberal & Professional Studies abides by the Americans with Disabilities Act (see http://www.ada.gov/pubs/adastatute08.htm), with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (see http://www.dol.gov/oasam/regs/statutes/sec504.htm), and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (see http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html) and will provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities covered by law. If you have a disability for which you may require accommodations, please contact Charnessa Warren, Director of Student Disability Services, at 773.702.6000 or charnessa@uchicago.edu in advance of the first class meeting.