Playwriting I Workshop – Spring 2020

Instructor
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Class Location
Carr, 241A

Office Hours
1-2:30 pm, Mondays

Course Overview
In this highly interactive course, each student will analyze the structure of stage plays, establish a creative writing practice, and write a 3-minute play and a 10-minute play by midsemester and a 1-act play by the end of the semester. Classes will include time for writing, classroom instruction & homework review, and student readings and critique of each other’s work.

This is not a screenwriting class.

Required Texts

*Playwriting from Formula to Form*, William M. Downs and Lou Anne Wright

*Wild Mind*, Natalie Goldberg


Course Materials
In-class exercises and freewriting assignments will be written longhand:

- Composition book – 100 pages, unruled preferable
- Lightweight fast pen (eg, PaperMate Flair [preferred], fountain pen, roller ball)

Course Content: Student Learning Objectives

1. Play structure: students will learn and understand the fundamentals of play structure, the language of playwriting, and theatre terminology

2. Story components: students will learn narrative structure in terms of plot, character, dialog, and world-building

3. Script format: students will learn the industry standard for stage play format

4. Daily writing practice: students will develop as writers (not just playwrights) by establishing a regular habit of freewriting as part of the creative process

5. Dialog, monologue, and scene writing: students will explore facets of these fundamental tools of the craft by writing and reading each other’s works

6. Show business: students will become acquainted with production, publishing, and other general playwriting information

7. The art of critique: students will practice soliciting, receiving, and offering supportive, critical feedback to further the art, structure, and clarity of each other’s plays
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<tr>
<th>Week (Dates)</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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| Week 1 (Jan 13)   | Discussion: introduction to course, texts, workshop process, freewriting, collaboration & critique  
                   In-class writing: freewriting | Read: Goldberg chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, & 8  
Write: Goldberg exercises (pp 10 & 18) & The Overheard Conversation |
| Week 2 (Jan 27)   | Discussion: Freewriting, Writer’s Voice & Creativity  
                   In-class reads: The Overheard Conversation  
                   In-class writing: freewriting | Read: Downs & Wright chapters 1, 2, 6 & 8 and Aristotle I-IX  
Write: Goldberg exercises (pp 48 & 50) & tangent from The Overheard Conversation (3-minute play) |
| Week 3 (Feb 3)    | ****3-Minute Plays DUE****  
                   Discussion: Idea/Premise, Formula Writing (Comedy/Tragedy), Rewriting, Format  
                   In-class reads: 3-minute plays  
                   In-class writing: freewriting | Read: Downs & Wright chapters 3 & 5, Goldberg chapters 38, 39 & 55  
Write: Goldberg exercise (p 142) & Sense and Memory exercise |
| Week 4 (Feb 10)   | Discussion: Characters and Dialog  
                   In-class reads: Sense and Memory exercise  
                   In-class writing: 12 Lines of Dialog | Read: Goldberg chapters 11, 13, 14 & 18  
Write: Goldberg exercise (What I Really Want to Say p 73-74) & 10-minute play |
| Week 5 (Feb 17)   | Discussion: Conflict and Dramatic Action  
                   In-class reads: 10-minute plays  
                   In-class writing: monologue | Read: Goldberg chapters 19, 21, 27 & 34  
Write: Goldberg exercises (pp 105 & 134) & 10-minute play |
| Week 6 (Feb 24)   | Discussion: Creative Process  
                   In-class reads: 10-minute plays | Read: Downs & Wright chapters 7, 9 & 10, Goldberg chapters 36, 40 & 42  
Write: Goldberg exercise (p 158) & 10-minute play |
| Week 7 (Mar 2)    | ****10-Minute Plays DUE****  
                   ****Freewriting Notebooks DUE****  
                   Discussion: 1-Act Play Planning  
                   In-class reads: 10-minute plays | Read: Downs & Wright chapter 4, Aristotle X-XVIII  
Write: Goldberg exercise (p 194) & 1-act play |
| WEEK 8 (Mar 16)   | Discussion: Story vs Situation  
                   In-class writing: Neutral Surface Scene | Read: Goldberg chapters 50, 53, 54 & 56  
Write: 1-act play focusing on making it a story |
| Week 9 (Mar 23)   | Discussion: Shifting Ground and Clarifying the Dramatic Action  
                   In-class writing: Reversals and Conflict Escalation | Write: 1-act play focusing on Shifting Ground and Clarifying the Dramatic Action |
| Week 10 (Mar 30)  | In-class reads: 1-act plays (working draft) | Write: 1-act play & freewriting |
| (April 6)         | no class | Write: 1-act play & freewriting |
| Week 11 (Apr 13)  | In-class reads: 1-act plays (working draft) | Write: 1-act play & freewriting |
| Week 12 (Apr 20)  | In-class reads: 1-act plays (final draft) | Write: 1-act play & freewriting |
| Week 13 (Apr 27)  | In-class reads: 1-act plays (final draft) | Write: 1-act play & freewriting |
| Week 14 (FINAL)  | ****Freewriting Notebooks DUE****  
                   ****1-Act Plays DUE****  
                   In-class reads: 1-act plays (final draft) | Keep writing! |
Project Schedule

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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Written Work</th>
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<tr>
<td>Week 3 (Feb 5)</td>
<td>3-minute play based on The Overheard Conversation in contemporary play format</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 7 (Mar 2)</td>
<td>10-minute play with distinguishable characters and dialog</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 7 (Mar 2)</td>
<td>Freewriting notebook will be submitted to review progress toward developing independent writing practice (not read for content, unless requested; reviewing for dates, exercise titles, and sufficient length to reflect 10-minutes of freewriting)</td>
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<td>Week 14 (May 6-ish)</td>
<td>1-act play &amp; freewriting notebook</td>
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Evaluation (subject to change)

1) Individual participation (66%)
   a) Attendance (5 points per class = 70 points)
      If late less than 10 minutes, provide a dated note (or via email) to the instructor on that day for full credit.
      If later than 10 minutes to class, early exit, or late return from break, 1 point will automatically be subtracted for each.
   b) Class participation (5 points per class = 70 points)
      All students are expected to interact, provide appropriate feedback, and share their work for full participation credit. Solo, dyad, and small group work—along with full class work—will be employed in class to ensure that students of various comfort levels may find success.
   c) Freewriting notebook (25 points per submission [at Weeks 8 & 16] = 50 points); not read for content, unless requested; reviewing for dates, exercise titles, and sufficient length to reflect 10-minutes of freewriting at each entry; freewriting more than the assigned exercises and for longer intervals may qualify for extra credit.

2) Written work (34%) [on-time submission; bring enough copies for in-class readings]
   a) 3-minute play (10 points)
   b) 10-minute play in proper format (25 points)
   c) 1-act play in proper format and complete structure (65 points)

Total points possible = 300

Cell phones may NOT be on during class. In-class use of computers for writing may be permitted after SPRING BREAK to work on 1-act plays in class. If you foresee issues with abiding by these constraints, consider taking a different class.

Please note: with a large class size, some readings might have to occur outside of class time.

Extracurricular Assignments
As playwrights, students are expected to read and see all ASU University Theatre productions offered this semester. In addition, seek out other live theatre and read as many plays as possible (with the goal of reading 1 play per week).

Class Attendance
Punctual and regular attendance is expected of all students. This is considered the responsibility of the student and particularly crucial because class meets once per week with in-class writing exercises that contribute to the final grade. It is also the responsibility of the student to consult with the instructor when an absence must be excused (only missed work may be excused and made up, NOT the absence). Being a course in which participation is a major learning and evaluative tool, attendance is a vital part of the curriculum. Attend all classes, even those classes where we will be reading plays in progress. That is class participation time to provide useful feedback to your classmates.
**Notice to Students with Disabilities**

Angelo State University complies with the American’s with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you suspect that you may have a disability (physical impairment, learning disability, psychiatric disability, etc), contact the Office of Student Services at 942-2191, Room 230-B Hardeman Building. If you need disability accommodations in this class, let the instructor know as soon as possible.

**Academic Advising**

The College of Arts and Sciences and the Department of Communication, Mass Media and Theatre require that students meet with a faculty advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The faculty advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, faculty advisor, and the department chair. Communication, Mass Media and Theatre majors who have questions about advising or declaring a major in the department can call 942-2301. Undeclared majors are supported by ASU's Center for Academic Excellence located in Library A312 and can be reached at 942-2710.

**Grade Appeal Process**

As stated in Angelo State University Operative Policy and Procedure (OP 10.03 Student Grade Grievances), a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see Operating Procedure 10.03 at [http://www.angelo.eduopmanual/docs/Section_10_Academic_Policies-Students/OP_10.03_Grade_Grievances.doc](http://www.angelo.eduopmanual/docs/Section_10_Academic_Policies-Students/OP_10.03_Grade_Grievances.doc).

**Honor Code Policy**

Violations of academic integrity are very serious matters and clearly documented in the ASU Student Handbook. The work a student submits in class is expected to be the student’s own work and must be work completed for that particular class and assignment. Plagiarism means intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another one as one’s own. This may include your own previous work. Plagiarism includes quoting or paraphrasing from other sources without acknowledging or citing the source of information or presenting the quote material as your own words. Students must be very clear about attribution of sources and must know how to cite sources in a paper. See the full Honor Code Policy at [http://www.angelo.edu/cstudent/documents/pdf/Student_Handbook.pdf](http://www.angelo.edu/cstudent/documents/pdf/Student_Handbook.pdf).

**Title IX at Angelo State University:**

Angelo State University is committed to providing and strengthening an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from sex discrimination of any kind. Sex discrimination, sexual misconduct, public indecency, interpersonal violence, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, and stalking are not tolerated at ASU. As a faculty member, I am a Responsible Employee meaning that I will report any allegations I am notified of to the Office of Title IX Compliance in order to connect students with resources and options in addressing the allegations reported. You are encouraged to report any incidents to ASU’s Office of Title IX Compliance and the Director of Title IX Compliance/Title IX Coordinator. You may do so by contacting:

Michelle Boone, J.D.
Director of Title IX Compliance/Title IX Coordinator
Mayer Administration Building, Room 200
325-942-2022
michelle.boone@angelo.edu

You may also file a report online 24/7 at [www.angelo.edu/incident-form](http://www.angelo.edu/incident-form).

If you are wishing to speak to someone about an incident in confidence you may contact the University Health Clinic and Counseling Center at 325-942-2173 or the ASU Crisis Helpline at 325-486-6345.

The Office of Title IX Compliance also provides accommodations related to pregnancy (such as communicating with your professors regarding medically necessary absences, modifications required because of pregnancy, etc.). If you are pregnant and need assistance or accommodations, please contact the Office of Title IX Compliance utilizing the information above.

For more information about Title IX in general you may visit [www.angelo.edu/title-ix](http://www.angelo.edu/title-ix).