



Screenplays – TV Series – Stageplays – Script Consulting – Getting a Manager

## **“A GOOD STORY WELL TOLD” PERFORMANCE WRITING MASTER CLASSES**

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### **A Good Story Well Told Performance Writing Course Outline Beginning/Intermediate Fall quarter 2019 Georgiana E. Mimms**

- I. Week 1
  - A. **Premise.**
    - 1. What is it?
    - 2. Why is it essential to a story?
      - a. Why versus what?
    - 3. Identifying the premise in extant plays and films
  - B. **Loglines**
    - 1. What are they?
    - 2. Why do they matter?
  - C. **Assignments**
    - 1. Read “Art of Dramatic Writing” by Lagos Egri handout
    - 2. Determine premise for 3 plays and 3 films (in writing)
- II. Week 2
  - A. **Elements of Story**
    - 1. **Finding your story**
      - a. Unusual character
      - b. Memorable incident
      - c. Action-what your character wants versus motivation-why your character wants it.
    - 2. **What makes your story interesting?**
      - a. True story about a unique event
      - b. Unique, yet familiar character

- c. Powerful story which is a metaphor for life?
- d. What makes you want to see a play, a film or watch. TV series?

**3. Why would an audience want to see it?**

- a. Put yourself in the seat of the audience.
  - 1) Character investment
  - 2) Curiosity/suspense
  - 3) Heroism
- b. Put yourself in the place of an actor.

**4. 3 Acts. Aristotle to Syd Field**

- a. First act – introduction/set up
- b. Second act – conflict
- c. Third act – resolution

**B. Assignments**

- a. Read Syd Field “Foundations of Screenwriting” handout
- b. Using just two characters, write what your protagonist wants and all the things your antagonist can prevent him/her from getting what he/she wants.

**III. Week 3**

**A. Introduction/set up. Act I.**

- 1. Who is your protagonist and what does he want? Could just be a peaceful life.
- 2. Who are the other main character and what do they want?
- 3. End of Act I – what happens to thwarts your protagonists from getting what he wants.

**B. Conflict Act II**

- 1. What kinds of things are thrown at your protagonist to prevent/her from getting what he wants.
  - a. Do the obstacles become bigger and bigger?
  - b. Are the obstacles believable?
  - c. Are the obstacles consistent with the premise?

**C. Resolution ACT III**

- 1. Does your protagonist get what he wants or not?
- 2. How?

**D. Assignments**

- a. Read handout “Creating unforgettable characters” Linda Seger
- b. Used note cards, begin to create scenes that you see in your story... they do not have to be in order. Just write out one liners of as many scenes as you see in your story.
- c. Create 3 page bio of protagonist. Physical, sociological and psychological attributes.

IV. Week 4

- A. Is the protagonist you created the very best fit for your premise? Should there be a change in the characteristics
- B. What is a beat sheet?
- C. **Assignments**
  - a. Create the full beat sheet for your story, complete with act breaks
  - b. Read Robert McKee handout

V. Week 5

- A. Using the beat sheet to write your scenes, your acts, your story.
- B. **Assignments**
  - 1. Write first draft of your story to turn in.
    - a. Screenplay – motion pictures, visual
    - c. TV Series – visual plus major dialogue
    - d. Play – dialogue/stage directions

D. Week 6

- 1. Coverage of your story/feedback.
- 2. **Assignments**
  - a. First draft at crafting/rewriting your story – writing is rewriting
  - b. Using the notes from the coverage to improve/rewrite your story.

**E. Week 7**

**Table reads with feedback**

**F. Week 8**

**Table reads with feedback**

**G. Follow-up.**

- a. **Former students will be permitted to submit scripts/plays after the conclusion of the class for a reduced fee. Fee will be based on material; starting at \$50 for a 10 minute play.**