MASTERING STORYTELLING

Kyle Weinandy

Levels : B1, B2, C1, C2

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

How can you best interest a listener in the facts, ideas or opinions you want to share? What is the best way to share your vision or the story you'd like to tell? And most importantly, how do you implicate your audience? As Dennis Lehane has said, "Narrative becomes the way you make sense of Chaos. That's how you make sense of the world."

From a very young age, we have been conditioned to digest information through structural narrative. We hunger for original stories in every form, whether through books, speechwriting, marketing, film, design, or even news 'stories'. Understanding dramatic structure and mastering storytelling is a powerful and necessary skill for success to help you in your creative endeavors, and prepare you for professional life.

A vast number of films and books use the tried and true storytelling principals of *Dramatic Structure* to deliver a compelling story. Frequently, non-fictional works such as news stories, essays, public speeches, and documentaries also borrow this structure. During class, we will cover pertinent examples of how storytelling is used for successful marketing and design, following up with practical exercises to put this knowledge to use in class.

COURSEWORK:

During this atelier, you will work creatively in several different formats. Your choice of writing submissions may include poetry, a short story, a one-act play, or a screenplay. Students may also choose to submit non-fictional essays. At least one assignment will include an example of digital storytelling such as a short film or a photo-essay. The atelier is based on the type of honest and 'constructive' criticism necessary to nurture beginning creators.

Texts on how to improve your storytelling will be given as weekly reading assignments. We will also dissect and critique at least two films and one screenplay in order to better understand *Dramatic Structure* through the techniques of building character, conflict and suspense. Many classes will include a round table critique of the submitted assignments. Class time will also be spent discussing the reading assignments and methods for improvement.

Every week, there will be an English reading assignment on relevant topics. Students will have the choice of writing fiction *or* non-fictional essays. In addition, students will be expected to apply storytelling techniques in a professional pitch and an oral presentation.

Autonomous project: In pairs, students will use the principles of storytelling for the design and marketing of an innovative product, service or event.

GRADING:

Grades are based on classroom participation, oral participation, written assignments and the final exam.

25 % Autonomous Project / Final Exam
25 % Personal Presentation & Pitch
25 % Group Creativity and Writing assignments
25 % Class Participation & Peer Review