

NACAE

National Association of Comics Art Educators

SEQUENTIAL ART DEPARTMENT

PROF. MARK KNEECE

Course Description: Students in this course will write scripts for comics stories.

Course Objectives and Purpose: This is a course in writing and creative visual planning. Students learn to break story ideas down visually into pages and panels with dialogue and captions. The student is taught to think "cinematically" and to understand the relationship between text and image in sequential art. The student is expected not only to know the basic written skills of grammar and composition, but the physical space that writing occupies. In addition, methods for adapting existing stories and for working within the length restrictions of various formats may be considered. Editing with consideration to time, space, and clarity is taught.

Skills to be Mastered: Students completing the class should know the following:

To script for sequential art

Understand the relationship between image and word

Page and panel layout concepts necessary for breaking a story down into a script

The theory behind different panel breakdown schemes

Adapting existing stories

Working within given page-length restrictions

Various scripting formats

Required Texts: The DC Comics Guide to Writing Comics, Dennis O'Neil

Recommended Texts: Comics and Sequential Art, Eisner
Understanding Comics, McCloud (Note: There will be many handouts along the way that will be required reading.)

Required Materials: You will need access to a word processor.

Consider the following when creating a script:

1. **Controlling idea:** any visual narrative should have a purpose, whether simply to entertain or to convey a serious message or both. A controlling idea should be apparent in the work.
2. **Unity:** All components of a script should in some way be connected to the controlling idea. This includes visuals, dialogue, sound effects, word choices, backgrounds, etc. Do not, for instance, shift from high drama to slapstick comedy arbitrarily or call for something just because it would make a "cool visual."
3. **Clarity:** It should be clear what is going on--which character is saying what, where the characters are in time and space (or anything else relevant to understanding the story).
4. **Technical proficiency:** This "highfalutin" term covers everything from adherence to a particular scripting format, to grammar, mechanics, and spelling. Writing should be neat, error free and professional looking.

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5. Special stipulations of the assignment: Be sure you are doing what is asked of you. It is your responsibility to speak up if you have trouble understanding instructions for any assignment.

The ultimate test of any script is in execution. A script is intended to be a guide for a finished product and not necessarily an end unto itself. In the real world, an editor may accept a script and ask that it be revised to suit particular needs (often having to do with one of the standards listed above). But the closer a script is to being "perfect" the better its chances of being accepted.

Class outline:

Plot synopsis; identifying important elements of the story / Draft
due Plotting

Formatting script

Dialogue, captions, Thought Balloons, SFX.

Dialogue and creating characters.

Editing. clarity, pacing, continuity

Editing. clarity, pacing, continuity

Editing.

Characters

Researching.

More editing. clarity, pacing, continuity..

Marketing

Plotting longer stories.

Submitting Work