COURSE TITLE: "What Did You Say?" The Art of Creating Page-Jumping Dialogue

COURSE OVERVIEW: From lines like "There's no place like home" to "I'll be back" dialogue has a way of staying with you long after the play or movie is over. In this six-week course, we'll examine the techniques used by some of the industry's top writers and "boldly go where no one has gone before," putting those techniques into practice. If you've ever struggled with dialogue or just looking to get your feet wet in playwriting or screenwriting, this class is for you! For mature audiences, 18+.

COURSE FORMAT: 6 Two-Hour Zoom Classes (Wednesdays from 6:30-8:30 PM ET)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: From class games to writing exercises, you'll be able to "hear me now and listen to me later", as we "pump you up" to create dialogue that jumps off the page.

By the end of the course, students will be able to compose dialogue that draws the audience in and conveys a clear and concise message.

> **Goal #1**: Apply motivation and intentionality to dialogue for compelling storytelling.
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> **Goal #2:** Create character voices which are unique and distinguishable from one another through tone, pacing, intentionality, and word choice.
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> **Goal #3:** Edit effectively to create character voicing that drives the story forward.

READINGS & MATERIALS:

> **Readings & Resources:**
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> - *The Playwright's Guidebook*, by Stuart Spencer
> - *What Playwrights Talk About When They Talk About Writing*, by Jeffrey Sweet
> - The Dramatist Guild, New Play Exchange, Playwrights Realm, Spotlight, YouTube, ScriptSlug
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> **Materials:**
>
> - Laptop
> - Access to Zoom
> - Notebook/Journal and Pen/Pencil

SCHEDULE:

Week One: What's In a Name?

Introductions

The role of the protagonist and antagonist

An examination into the importance of naming conventions for building a strong character.

Week Two: Who Are You? Who? Who? Who? Who?

Review of previous session

The use of music in assisting with character, scene building, and plot development when creating dialogue.

Week Three: And That's All I Got To Say About That!

Review previous sessions

From education to tone, applying principles of characterization to dialogue.

Week Four: Round, Round, Get Around!

Review previous sessions

How setting plays into a character's dialogue.

Week Five: Practice Makes Perfect (or at least better)

Review previous sessions

Work through writing and walk through editing.

Week Six: That's All Folks!

Review previous sessions

Importance of combining elements to create impactful dialogue.

EXAMPLES OF CLASS ACTIVITIES:

Mad Lib Exercise: Fill in the blank style writing, where students select words (verbs, nouns, adjectives, etc) to fill in the blanks, with instructions to go against the grain of what feels predictable or natural.

Springboard Writing: Students will have fifteen minutes to write a character backstory for an image shared with the class, then share what they wrote to dive deep into character development.

Collaborative Writing: Students will work in small groups, utilizing the characters they developed in Springboard Writing #1 to create a short scene, given a series of objectives (inciting incident, climax, resolution).

What Comes Next: A game where the participants hear memorable lines from plays and movies and must name the character or piece that the line of dialogue comes from. They must then flip the line, to mean something other than what the original writer meant, for example: “My mama always said life was like a box of chocolates.” “The more you eat the bigger you’re gonna be.”

Expectations for Interaction: *Lights! Camera! Action! Be ready for your closeup, because all participants are required to attend each session with their cameras on and ready to share work they have written inside and outside of class. Additionally, participants are required to treat others in the class with respect and courtesy. The use of AI in this course is restricted as writing is truly a human art form and each student is here to learn and grow. Be planted!*