



EGL 56 W: Creating Dynamic Stories Using the Enneagram-Story Connection

Duration: 10 Weeks

Course Description:

Creating Dynamic Stories is a class that, for the first time, brings together two disparate yet related topics: classic story development best practices and the Enneagram System. The Enneagram is the most powerful model available today that describes the nine common personality styles of human thought, feeling, and action. Classic story development is the common set of storytelling best practices that has developed over hundreds of years of creative writing. The two systems together provide a powerful and proven method for developing effective stories and robust and multidimensional characters. Through this class participants will learn a systematic process, “The Rapid Story Development Method,” that will walk them through seven steps designed to build out any story’s natural structure and create characters that ring true as convincing, fully formed people. Through weekly reading, targeted written assignments, class video chats, and individual one-on-one sessions students will systematically conceive, design, and execute the core story development components necessary to assure writing success using these two powerful and complimentary systems.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the tenth week, students will:

- understand the basics of the Enneagram for Writers,
- understand the basics of classic story structure,
- understand how the Enneagram System relates to overall story development,
- learn a repeatable and proven methodology for story development,
- have working tools and deliverables to move to the next steps in the story development process.

Required Text:

Rapid Story Development: How to Use the Enneagram-Story Connection to Become a Master Storyteller, by Jeff Lyons (Focal Press—order from Amazon: <https://amzn.to/2S919Gp>)

Add'l Recommended Text: Anatomy of a Premise Line: How to Master Premise and Story Development for Writing Success, by Jeff Lyons (Focal Press—order from Amazon: <http://amzn.to/1Es0iAm>).

My Presence Online:

I am almost always available online, either in class or via my email. Each week begins on a Monday and ends on a Friday. Written assignments are due by Thursday night midnight Pacific time. You can use the weekends for commenting on discussion questions if you like. Please note, that once a week is completed, I will not go back to the previous week, in order to keep the class progressing. Of course, life sometimes gets in the way, so if you need extra time for a good reason, please let me know, and we can make arrangements.

Weekly Reading and Discussion Questions

Each week, I will have you read something from the selected readings and will post discussion questions on that reading. Specific reading sections will be given at the beginning of each week. It will be mandatory that students participate in these discussions by sharing ideas or asking additional questions. These will not be live, one-on-one, but rather in the discussion areas online.

Weekly Written Assignments:

Written assignments are the craft of the class, and they are mandatory. Templates and forms for written assignments will be provided at the beginning of the course and each week.

Weekly One-on-One Sessions:

Once per week we will hold “hot seat sessions.” These will be Chat/Zoom sessions where I will work one-on-one with students and work through questions, blockages, and work the 7-step process directly with individuals. There will be one weekly video-chat session (Weds night). Sessions will be scheduled when most people are able to attend. Sessions will be 60 minutes. In this context, group sessions, rather than individual sessions, are preferable, as a lot of learning happens when you “watch” other people go through the process real-time. If a student is shy or doesn’t want to talk about their story with others present, or if time zone problems restrict their ability to participate in class, I will be very available for private one-on-one time. Just email me to arrange privates. All group sessions will be recorded and made available to all students throughout the class schedule on a private video channel.

Critiquing:

Because students are learning brand new techniques, they won't have the initial skills to critique other students, so instead we will be discussing every student's assignment, guided by me, to ensure everyone understands each technique as it is implemented. This will be done as part of the one-on-one video sessions and also during the discussion sessions online in the chat/discussion areas. The other reason for no critiquing or workshopping is that your workload will be heavy throughout the class and I don't want to burden you with the time it will require to analyze other people's work (especially when you haven't figured out your own yet).

Written Assignment Lengths:

Written assignments will be mostly directed by template forms, which will be provided. The nature of the process and the assignments are such that brevity is the point; less is more. Keep as short as possible, avoiding unnecessary telling of backstory, exposition, or character feelings. Just answer the questions as asked or fill in the blanks as appropriate.

Grades:

For those of you who are taking this course for a grade, the breakdown is as follows. Please note that you can change your grading status at any point before the final class meeting (Friday of the last week of class) by contacting the Continuing Studies department.

- Writing exercises (weeks 1-8) 50%
- One-on-one sessions (weeks 1-8) 35%
- Posted Discussions/Questions (weeks 1-8) 15%

Week One: Intro & Enneagram Basics

Lecture: Basic course introductions and Enneagram system basics: Enneagram model and essentials for writers.

Add'l Reading: Chapters 3 & 4

Written Assignment: BEFORE you read the week's lecture, or read any of the required materials, write out your story idea as best you can and upload to the system for my review. This assignment will be used as your benchmark for later comparison to the final premise line in week 10.

Chat/ZOOM Session: Weds (Date TBD), 6pm PST, 7pm MST, 8pm CST, 9pm EST. Length 60 mins.

Week Two/Three: Build the Enneagram Foundation of the Moral Component

Lectures 1 & 2: Both weeks will focus on the Moral Component as a standalone story component and also as an Enneagram tool. We will cover the moral blind spot, immoral effect, dynamic moral tension, and examine the Enneagram components that can help build these other pieces.

Add'l Readings: Chapters 10 & 11

-

Written Assignment: AFTER you have read the two lectures for the weeks, and AFTER you have read the assigned reading, using the "Moral Component Worksheet," and the "Moral Enneagram Worksheet," build out the components of the tool.

Chat/ZOOM Session: Weds (Date TBD), 6pm PST, 7pm MST, 8pm CST, 9pm EST. Length 60 mins.

Week Four: Define the Protagonist's Enneagram Style

Lecture: We will look at each of the nine Enneagram personality styles from the perspective of character-building.

Add'l Readings: Chapter 5

-

Written Assignment: AFTER you have read the assigned reading, using the “Protagonist Enneagram Worksheet” analyze your protagonist’s Enneagram nature. Also, submit any new changes to your moral component from previous weeks if you have reworked them.

Chat/ZOOM Session: Weds (Date TBD), 6pm PST, 7pm MST, 8pm CST, 9pm EST. Length 60 mins.

Week Five: Define the Protagonist’s Evolution and De-Evolution Enneagram Styles

Lecture: We will examine the nature of character change as a story structure component, but also how the Enneagram can inform the writer in developing a protagonist’s change process over the course of an entire story.

Add’l Reading: Chapters 8 & 9

-

Written Assignment: AFTER you have read the assigned reading, use the “Protagonist Change Worksheet” and the “Protagonist change Triangle Tool” to build the change process for your central protagonist.

Chat/ZOOM Session: Weds (Date TBD), 6pm PST, 7pm MST, 8pm CST, 9pm EST. Length 60 mins.

Week 6: Identify the Common and Uncommon Pinches, Crunches, Blind Spots, and Distortion Filters

Lecture: We examine various core Enneagram character components, primarily related to communication styles and conflict styles, and demonstrate how to build unique and individual voices for your main characters.

-

Add’l Reading: Chapters 6 & 7

-

Written Assignment: AFTER you have read the assigned reading for the week, use the “Protagonist Common/Uncommon Buttons Worksheet” to identify your protagonist’s main pinches, crunches, blind spots, etc.

Chat/ZOOM Session: Weds (Date TBD), 6pm PST, 7pm MST, 8pm CST, 9pm EST. Length 60 mins.

Week 7: Define the Opposition

Lecture: This week’s lecture will examine the process of opposition development, the function of the main opponent, and how the Enneagram can be a valuable tool in creating the pitch-perfect opponent structure for any story.

-

Add'l Reading: Chapter 14

Written Assignment: Using the “Enneagram Opponent Triangle Tool,” build your central opposition from your knowledge of the Enneagram and your protagonist’s Enneagram Style.

-

Chat/ZOOM Session:

Weds (Date TBD), 6pm PST, 7pm MST, 8pm CST, 9pm EST. Length 60 mins.

Week 8/9: Build the Enneagram Elements of the Story Middle

Lectures: Both weeks’ lectures will focus on the critical story structure process of creating a compelling middle for your story, how to maintain narrative drive, and examine the two key patterns of drama every story needs to avoid the “mushy middle.”

-

Add'l Reading: Chapter 12

-

Written Assignment 1: Using the “Classic Structure Middle Worksheet,” build the classic story structure middle components for your story.

Written Assignment 2: Using the “Define the Pattern of Decline Worksheet,” build your protagonist’s emotional pattern of decline during the middle of the story.

Written Assignment 3: Using the “Define the Pattern of Elevation Worksheet,” build your protagonist’s emotional pattern of redemption during the last quarter of the story.

-

Chat/ZOOM Session:

Weds (Date TBD), 6pm PST, 7pm MST, 8pm CST, 9pm EST. Length 60 mins.

Week 10: Develop the Premise Line & Next Steps in Development

Lecture: This week’s lecture will describe the important topic of premise development and will pull together all the previous weeks’ work in the exercise of premise line creation. It will also provide “next steps” advice and suggestions about how to proceed to the next level of story development and talk about how to know when you are ready to start actual pages of your novel or nonfiction book.

Written Assignment: AFTER you have read this week’s lecture, using the feedback from the previous weeks and the “Anatomy of a Premise Line Worksheet,” take your first stab at writing a premise line. Premise development is its own 8-week course, so you don’t be frustrated if this is a difficult task. The point is to introduce you to this in the development process as part of next-steps, along with the concept of short synopsis writing.

Chat/ZOOM Session:

Preliminary Course Syllabus

Weds (Date TBD), 6pm PST, 7pm MST, 8pm CST, 9pm EST. Length 60 mins.

Please contact the Stanford Continuing Studies office with any questions
365 Lasuen St., Stanford, CA 94305
continuingstudies@stanford.edu
650-725-2650