

Patty Meyer
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**The Alchemy of Adaptation
Summer Workshop 2025
Instructor: Patricia K. Meyer**

As an author of fiction, non-fiction, or both, you are creating content that could end up adapted into a feature film or television series. Over 70% of the movies and shows you see are based on source material: books, plays, magazine and news articles. The entertainment industry is fueled by adaptations, published or self-published, even TikTok spots and Substack stories. A compelling, well-told story, no matter the genre, is irresistible fodder for cinematic adaptation.

During our five 90-minute seminars, a seasoned screenwriter, with an expertise in adaptation will share her specialized toolkit and present techniques that apply to all story forms. She will demonstrate how a screenwriter approaches this alchemic process through a visual lens – how the character’s journey must be cinematic and how dramatic structure evolves from character arc. By screening clips, powerpoints, and discussing character bios and two-page synopses of your own work, the instructor will offer approaches to identifying an approach to either a feature or series adaptation of your work.

NOTE: Writers who attend this class find these visual storytelling tools invaluable to their own work, even if they choose not to adapt their own material.

OPTIONAL: Prior to class, Writers will submit a two-page synopsis of their prose work-in-progress for class discussion. Assignments will be minimal and optional, but will include character biographies, a crucial part of screen adaptation.

COURSE SCHEDULE (Subject to Adjustment for Time and the Creative Winds):

Tuesday, July 8, 2025

Introductions: Writers will introduce themselves and discuss the book or novel they are writing, specifying the genre and the main character’s(s’) journey.

Power-Point presentation: “The Alchemy of Adaptation.” General discussion. Overview of the Screenwriter’s approach to adaptation.

Optional Assignment: Writers will write character bios – two pages maximum.

Wednesday, July 9, 2025

Power-Point presentation: Character Development & Story Structure. Distilling, illuminating visually, discovering the arc. Show clips.

In-Class: Writers volunteer to have their character bios projected on-screen to read and discuss.

Thursday, July 10, 2025

In-Class: Writers volunteer to have their character bios projected on-screen to read and discuss.

Screen clips and discuss.

Friday, July 11, 2025

NO CLASS. HIKE, WRITE, REST!

Saturday, July 12, 2025

In-Class: Writers volunteer to have their two-page synopses projected on-screen to read and discuss. 10-minute discussion per project. Instructor will offer an approach to an adaptation.

Sunday, July 13, 2025

In-Class: Writers volunteer to have their two-page synopses projected on-screen to read and discuss. 10-minute discussion per project. Instructor will offer an approach to an adaptation.

FADE OUT/END OF CLASS

We hope that each of you will come away from this class with new storytelling tools and possibly a broad-strokes approach to a screenplay or TV pilot/series adaptation of your work. May you find ways to use these new tools as you continue to work on your own book.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Want to learn how to write screenplays? Read them. And if they are adaptations—read both the source material and the screenplay; then view the film or television series and study the script-to-screen process.

To find screenplays: Via Google or other search engine, type in the script title and “PDF.”

Or go to:

<https://www.nyfa.edu/student-resources/10-great-websites-download-movie-scripts/>

ADAPTATIONS (to name only a few)	
<p>Non-Fiction</p> <p><i>Erin Brockovich</i> <i>Born on the 4th of July</i> <i>Milk</i> <i>Hidden Figures</i> <i>Thank you For Smoking</i> <i>American Splendor</i> <i>Twelve Years a Slave</i> <i>Imitation Game</i> <i>A Beautiful Mind</i> <i>Spotlight</i></p> <p>Fiction</p> <p><i>Atonement</i> <i>The Great Gatsby</i> <i>The Fault in Our Stars</i> <i>No Country for Old Men</i> <i>Fight Club</i> <i>Up in the Air</i> <i>Deadpool</i> <i>The Diving Bell and the Butterfly</i> <i>The Pianist</i> <i>Forrest Gump</i> <i>Gone Girl</i> <i>The Girl on the Train</i> <i>The Godfather</i> <i>Lord of the Rings</i> <i>The Color Purple</i> <i>Silence of the Lambs</i> <i>Remains of the Day</i></p>	<p>Short Stories</p> <p><i>“Rear Window”</i> <i>“All About Eve”</i> <i>“Benjamin Button”</i> <i>“Brokeback Mountain”</i> <i>“The Swimmer”</i> <i>“The Secret Life of Walter Mitty”</i> <i>“The Birds”</i> <i>“The Fall of the House of the Usher”</i> <i>“The Most Dangerous Game”</i></p> <p>Plays</p> <p><i>Moonlight</i> <i>Taming of the Shrew</i> (Modern Adaptations: <i>Kiss Me Kate</i> (musical version) <i>Long Day’s Journey Into Night</i> <i>Children of a Lesser God</i> <i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> <i>Frost/Nixon</i> <i>Fences</i> <i>Amadeus</i> <i>Driving Miss Daisy</i> <i>Doubt</i> <i>Sleuth</i> <i>The Odd Couple</i> <i>Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom</i> <i>In Moonlight Black Boys Look Blue</i> <i>The Beasts of the Southern Wild</i></p>