

Assignments

Every participant is responsible for three UNIQUE storyworld prototypes.

The first prototype will be a storyworld set on a version of our Earth that has somehow diverged from consensus reality. (Due first class of March.)

The second prototype will be a storyworld pitch for a serial narrative (comic, tv show, computer game). (Due first class of April.)

The third prototype will be set on an expansive invented world or an Earth so changed it might as well be another world. (Due first class of May.)

For the first and third prototypes you can present one of the following

- a piece of fiction
- a bible for a TV Show or videogame
- a comic book script/storyboards.

The second prototype, the pitch must be a bible.

The piece of fiction must be 12 pages in length minimum and must present the world, its characters, its conflicts, clearly and forcefully. It must also be a real story with a sense of cohesion and tension, with characters and mood etc. Warning: two pages of exposition and ten pages of dialogue does not a great world make. Read the first chapter of The Hunger Games to see how quickly an entire storyworld can be rendered.

The bible will be 15 pages minimum and must contain all the necessary information for an outsider to evaluate the storyworld and, if called upon, to mount a production of that storyworld. Bibles can contain illustrations and maps and other design materials but the bulk should describe the world, the characters, the main conflicts and, if possible, a synopsis of the first two episodes. A bible must be imagined as a pitch to a media studio. Originality will be key. An imitation of The Vampire Diaries won't really fly. Also be sure to detail how the world is introduced to the characters. A synopsis of the first two episodes should be included.

The comic script will be for a single 22 page issue. In one issue you should be able to give us a strong sense of the world, the characters, the conflict—you should be able to hook us. Again the storyworld must be highly original and forcefully presented. If you are one of those writer-artist types and wish to submit storyboard roughs please do. A one page synopsis of the next two issues should be included.

Understand: it takes a lot of work to produce an effective coherent piece of fiction or a strong single issue of a comic--on the other hand if the fiction piece or the comic is compelling enough it can mask the lack of originality in the storyworld. (See in the

comic department The Strange Talent of Luther Strode.) In a well-written story a single vampire or a single robot can go a long way. A storyworld bible on the other hand might be easier to write than a piece of fiction on a page by page basis but with a bible you can't hide behind voice or good writing—with bibles you live and die on your originality.

Students should remember to balance their world with larger narrative concerns of character, conflict, plot etc. The world alas is never enough. Even the worlds that are designed as settings for roleplaying and computer games must have a story of some kind spelled out that works in tandem with the world-details. A world is only as good as its story; a story is only as good as its world and it is the original (and elegant) confluence of story and world that will be foremost on my grading brain.

Assignment 1 (warning: this is a twist on the conceit in David Levithan's novel Every Day): Due 2.14

For reasons you cannot explain you wake up in a new body in a parallel Earth. You are a young adult scavenger or soldier on an Earth that is still recognizable but has somehow changed for the worst. Write a How To Survive Guide that you plan on posting when ever you return to your world in order to prepare any other poor fool who falls into your predicament.

Five Pages of fiction: due next class in paper form.

Assignment 2: First Storyworld Prototype: Due 3.7

Create storyworld set on a version of our Earth that has somehow changed. Any genre.

OR create a storyworld based on one of the following prompts

A For your protagonists the world has abruptly changed. The change leaves the mimetic world more or less intact and primarily impacts your protagonist—something extraordinary has happened to her that put her outside the normal confines of the mimetic world, and thrusts her into a exciting dangerous reality which she struggles to understand; she sees a ghost, gains a power, is menaced by aliens, discovers a magic sword, is made into a vampire or a werewolf, stumbles upon a secret world inside our world. Whatever the change is it must create a difficult conflict between what she was and what she has become.

B For your protagonists the world has abruptly changed. The change not only affects your protagonists it also impacts the mimetic world of the story in some essential way. The world-change need not be vast or cataclysmic; it might be something subtle but no matter what the degree one thing is certain: this new world poses a serious challenge to your protagonist. She will find herself on the losing side

of whatever has happened and what's worse is she will have a young sibling in her care who is less than loyal to your protagonist.

A 12 page fictional narrative or a comic script for a single 22-page issue or a 15 page bible pitch to a network or game studio.

To satisfy the assignment you must paint a compelling picture of the all the worlds inherent to the story: worlds lost and worlds gained.

Assignment 3: Second Storyworld Prototype: Due 4.4

A studio asks you to submit a storyworld pitch for an original a serial narrative (comic, tv show, computer game) in the fantasy, science fiction, superhero or supernatural genres. The story/world you create must be strong deep enough to serve as a basis for other transmedia projects. For the pitch produce a bible which describes the world, the characters, the main conflicts and write up synopsis of the first two episodes.

OR

A studio asks you to submit a pitch for one of three serial television reboots they are planning for the next season. The studio wants a new vision; outside the box if necessary; you can change anything you like as long the franchise is still recognizable. They essentially want you to do for the property what Ronald Moore did for Battlestar Galactica. Pitch one of the following: The Green Lantern, Twilight, Red Dawn. The story/world you create must be strong deep enough to serve as a basis for other transmedia projects. For the pitch produce a bible which describes the world, the characters, the main conflicts and also write up synopsis of the first two episodes.

15 pages.

Assignment 3: Third Storyworld Prototype: Due 5.2

Create a storyworld set on an expansive invented world or an Earth so changed it might as well be another world. Any genre.

OR

Create your own expansive story/world set on an alternate Earth or a constructed world. It may be a steampunk Victorian world run by werewolves or it might by a wuxia epic world where the Chinese colonized California or it might be a world where humans rule the day and vampires the night. No matter what the world build a central conflict into your story/world, a crux, but one that has more or less settled into a stalemate. You have two choices:

A Something surprising happens that involves intimately your protagonist which threatens to plunge the world into chaos or ruin. (This is more or less the meta-plot of Avatar: Last Airbender series and the X-Men movies and the Lord of the Rings and many other stories.)

B A new power arises and threatens to overrun all the world and your protagonist is somehow deeply involved in the drama.

A 15 page minimum fictional narrative or a comic script for a single 22-page issue or a 20 page pitch to a network or game studio.

To satisfy the assignment you must paint a compelling picture of the all the worlds inherent to the story: worlds lost and worlds gained.