English 112: Screenwriting Workshop  
Instructor: Prof. Michael Schilf

OPPOSITES

THREE TO FOUR PAGES MAXIMUM

Write a scene in which two people from seemingly opposite poles are forced together. By the end of the scene they grow closer, either physically or emotionally or both.

For your scene to be effective, you’ll need to find interesting, believable differences between the characters – the stronger their differences, the further they will have to travel, and the more interesting your scene will be. In addition to the external differences, be sure to consider how they react differently to the predicament of being stuck together – does one panic? Is one delighted? Aroused? Brave? Remember how quickly a reaction to a problem gets us involved with a character.

Why are they stuck together? Find something difficult but plausible, something from which they cannot escape, that forces they together. For example, imagine two opposite characters on a Ferris wheel that breaks down with them at the very top.

Be clear about what brings them together in the end. Do they discover some common interest or objective? Do the romantic deigns of one of the characters succeed in breaking through the barriers? Does the problem of dealing with the location do it? If so, how?

By now one of the things you’ve learned is that life in a scene comes from the desires of the characters. Give each character a very clear goal in this scene. Choose one character whose shoes we will be in, i.e., decide whose scene it is and be clear about it. Make us feel what he or she feels!

Questions that should be answered by the assignment:

Who are these people? How are they different from one another?

Whose scene is it? What does he or she want? When do we know that? (It should be early.) What does the other character want? When do we know that?

Why are they stuck together? How have the circumstances affected them? In other words, the reason they’re stuck together has caused them both problems – what are they?

How have they changed by the end of the scene? They have grown closer – but in what ways?