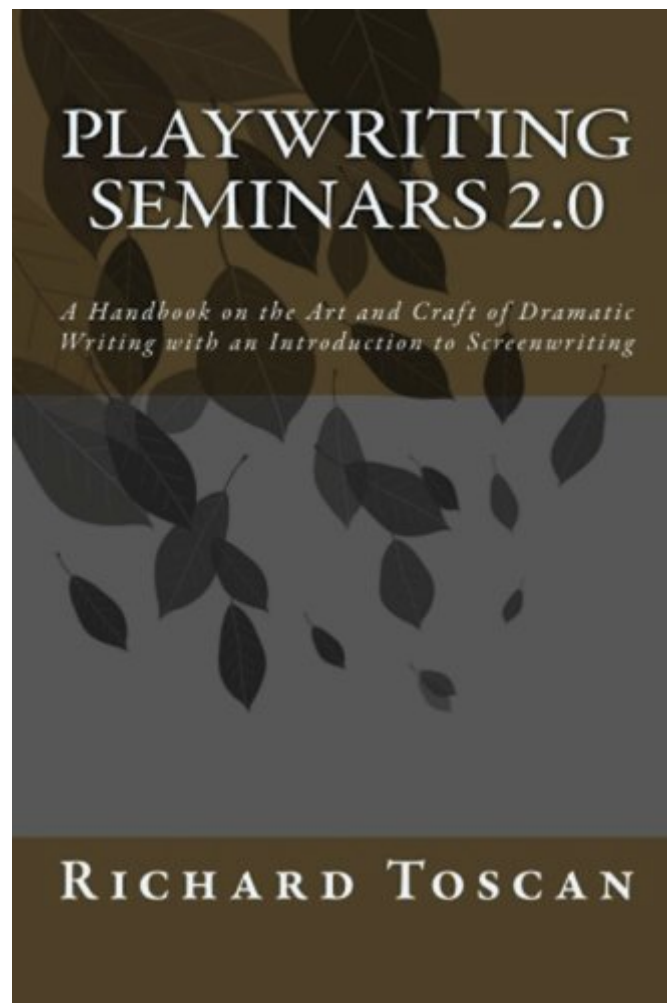


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# Playwriting Seminars 2.0: A Handbook On The Art And Craft Of Dramatic Writing With An Introduction To Screenwriting



## Synopsis

Playwriting Seminars is a treasure-trove of information, philosophy, and inspiration (Theatre Journal), an absolutely essential guide to all aspects of playwriting and a valuable whitewater raft trip down the rapids of Hollywood screenwriting (Magellan), and a terrific learning environment for writers (WebCrawler Select). It was also a recommended resource for playwrights at New Dramatists (NYC). The Handbook's initial concepts came from the author's work with Lucasfilm and the BBC. It was originally developed for playwrights and screenwriters, but has since been used by writers of fiction and nonfiction books. This new edition covers all aspects of writing full-length plays with an expanded treatment of screenwriting for Hollywood and independent film as well as diagrams of key elements of dramatic structure. Playwriting techniques are explained with many examples from classic and contemporary plays performed today by America's regional theatres as well as on Broadway and Off-Broadway. The 392 page Handbook explains the interconnections between characters and plot and the importance of subtext to character development in the contemporary theatre (what characters don't tell us matters as much as what they say in dialogue). Key exercises are included for developing voice as a writer and for creating the essential dual plot structure that supports intriguing characters in today's theatre. Many professionals in theatre and film are quoted on key parts of the art and craft of playwriting and screenwriting to help explain effective techniques. Special sections of the Handbook focus on getting inspiration and avoiding writer's block, editing first drafts, professional script formats for theatre and film (including software), how to launch new scripts, putting together submission packages for theatres and competitions, how to write an effective script synopsis and writer's bio, working with directors, actors and agents, how to survive audience talkbacks following readings and workshop productions, methods to adjust your playwriting skills for screenwriting and television work, and options for making a living at the craft of dramatic writing. Richard Toscan was Dean of the School of Theatre at the University of Southern California where for many years he taught playwriting and play analysis. His professional work as a producer, story editor, playwright, and judge of new play and screenplay competitions informs his approach to what makes new plays work in the contemporary theatre. He has worked in association with Lucasfilm and noted figures in theatre, film, and television. That experience has led him to stress the importance of developing voice as a playwright and the dual plot structures used by nearly all produced playwrights today. His radio dramas have been broadcast throughout the world by the BBC, NPR, CBC, and ABC. Toscan later taught playwriting and screenwriting while Dean of PSU's School of Fine & Performing Arts. More recently he was Dean of VCU's

School of the Arts where he founded the Cinema Program.

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## Customer Reviews

How To textbooks can be didactic and narrow, but when dealing with a creative topic like writing for the theatre, what you want is something motivational and expansive. You need to know where the barriers are, but you also want to be encouraged to leap over them and do something - well - creative. That's what Richard Toscan has delivered with his newly revised text, "Playwriting Seminars 2.0". Drawing on a long career as both a theatre professional and an academic, Dr. Toscan presents playwrights with an A to Z guidebook, an invaluable tool for those seeking to enter this competitive and challenging profession. I first met Rick Toscan when he and John Houseman were running the Drama School at the University of Southern California in the late 1970s. Over the thirty plus years since, Dr. Toscan has accumulated a vast network of industry contacts and experiences, both as a playwright himself, and as a producer, professor, and university administrator. Along the way, he has taught countless talented writers the fundamentals of play structure, good storytelling, and the hard realities of the "business". Now that collection of insights and experiences are available to anyone anxious to learn what it takes to succeed as a

playwright. As a bonus, "Playwriting Seminars 2.0" includes chapters on writing for the movie and television industries as well. There's a lot of information crammed into the book's seventy-six chapters. You'll explore play topics and titles, copyright issues, finding your voice as a writer, character development, story structure, editing, using stage directions, script formats, submitting your work to regional theatres and competitions, finding an agent, working with a director, and much, much more.

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