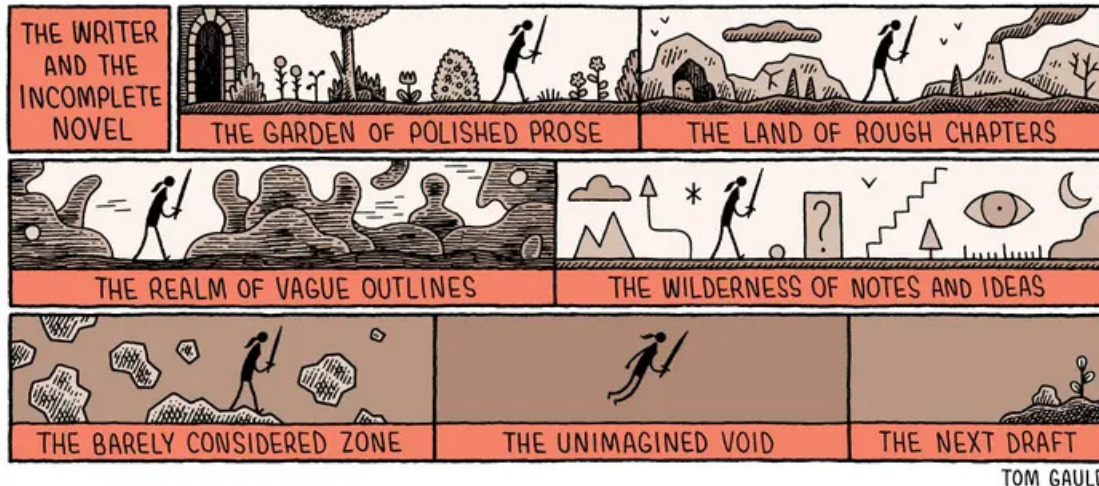


**THE UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS**  
**ENGL 7471: FORMS OF FICTION**  
**PLOT MODELS FOR NOVELS**



TOM GAULD

**Class:** M 5:30-8:30 pm  
**Professor:** Eric Schlich  
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**Office Hours:** By appt.

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

Ever tried writing a novel and got stuck? We've all been there. But did you know you can plot a book at any stage of writing—before, during, or even after your first draft? In this class we'll study how to plot your novel by exposing you to various models and methods. Our focus will be less on drafting—and *pantsing*—and more on the art of planning a novel's structure—A.K.A. *plotting*.

In addition to traditional story models like Freytag's Triangle, Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey, and Hollywood's three-act structure, we'll look at Dan Harmon's Story Circle, Kurt Vonnegut's Good Fortune/Ill Fortune Graph, Ronald Tobias's 20 Master Plots, Randy Ingermanson's Snowflake Model, and J.K. Rowling's Plot Chart for *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*.

Our study of three-act structure will include examples not only from novels, but from children's books, screenplays, and TV shows. Students will present on the structure of a novel and screenplay of their choosing and be expected to generate original novel outlines, graphs, chapter summaries, character lists, beat boards, etc. Finally, you will draft, workshop, and revise a novel synopsis and query letter to a literary agent with your novel's pitch.

We'll take apart our favorite plots to learn how to build plots of our own. We might even save a cat.

### TEXTS (TENTATIVE)

Alison, Jane. *Meander, Spiral, Explode: Design and Pattern in Narrative*. Catapult, 2019.  
 Field, Syd. *Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting*. Delta, 2005.

- Maass, Donald. *Writing the Breakout Novel Workbook*. Penguin, 2004.
- McKee, Robert. *Story: Substance, Structure, Style, and the Principles of Screenwriting*. ReganBooks, 1997.
- Snyder, Blake. *Save the Cat! The Last Book on Screenwriting You'll Ever Need*. Michael Wiese Productions, 2005.
- Tobias, Ronald B. *20 Master Plots: And How to Build Them*. Writer's Digest Books, 2012.
- Vogler, Christopher. *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*. Michael Wiese Productions, 2007.