

DC 222-201 Classic Hollywood Film Structure

Summer Session I 2013

Monday and Wednesday 1:30PM-4:45PM

14 East Jackson LL105

Instructor: Matt Quinn

Email: mquinn@cdm.depaul.edu

Office 404 (243 S. Wabash Ave, Chicago, IL 60604)

Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 12:30PM – 1:30PM

Summary of the Course

Critical analysis of successful Hollywood films and their narrative structures. Films of various genres and eras will be examined. Students will learn how to recognize classical three-act structure in finished films and scripts. Students will develop a cinematic language with which to discuss films as well as a toolbox of techniques to use when making films. Key story concepts to be discussed include: protagonist, antagonist, want versus need, elements of the future, poetic justice, planting and payoff, catalyst, climax, and Aristotelian terminology.

Learning Outcomes

- Students will develop a solid understanding of the relationship between character and story structure.
- Students will be able to identify the various narrative tools available to filmmakers in the writing and producing process.
- Students will develop a cinematic vocabulary with which to discuss films critically.

Textbooks and Printed Resources

Required: "The Tools of Screenwriting" by David Howard and Edward Mabley ISBN-10: 0312119089

Additional assigned readings and handouts provided by the Instructor.

Prerequisites

None

Grading

Class attendance and participation 10%

Screening Response Assignments 40%

Midterm 20%

Final Paper 30%

A = 100-93, A- = 92-90, B+ = 89-88, B = 87-83, B- = 82-80, C+ = 79-78, C = 77-73, C- = 72-70, D+ = 69-68, D = 67-63, D- = 62-60, F = 59-0. A indicates excellence, B indicates good work, C indicates satisfactory work, D work is unsatisfactory in some respect, F is substantially unsatisfactory work.

Drop Deadline

Sunday, June 30th - Last day to drop classes with no penalty

Attendance

Attendance and participation is mandatory. An absence, which is defined as not showing up to class, arriving more than 10 minutes late to class or departing before class is formally dismissed will constitute a reduction in your overall grade.

D2L

You will be using D2L extensively in this course. To log on, go to:

<https://login.depaul.edu/cas/login?service=https://d2l.depaul.edu/d2l/orgtools/CAS/Default.aspx>

and enter using your campus connect logon and password. Once you are logged on, click on the course number link and you will find links to the syllabus, course outline, video lectures, discussion forums, weekly assignments, etc.

Lecture Discussion Forum

Film is a largely subjective medium that demands conversation and debate. To facilitate this, you will participate in a D2L lecture discussion forum. After every class, you will be required to respond to a topic posted in this online forum. Participation in the lecture discussion forum is mandatory for online and absent students, as this counts towards your participation grade – Minimum of one post per lecture.

Course Outline

Class 1 – Monday, June 17th

Course Intro, Origin of Cinematic Storytelling

Screening: NATIONAL LAMPOON'S VACATION

Assignment: Screening Response, "The Tools of Screenwriting" Pages 3-27

Class 2 – Wednesday, June 19th

Character and Conflict

Screening: DRIVE

Script Reading: DRIVE

Assignment: Screening Response, "The Tools of Screenwriting" Pages 28-39

Class 3 – Monday, June 24TH

Paradigm Three Act Structure

Screening: INDIANA JONES AND THE RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK

Assignment: Screening Response, "The Tools of Screenwriting" Pages 43-54

Class 4 – Wednesday, June 26TH

"A Hero with a Thousand Faces"

Screening: WRECK-IT-RALPH

Assignment: Screening Response

Class 5 – Monday, July 1ST

Sequence Approach and Save the Cat

Screening: THE GRADUATE

Assignment: Screening Response

Class 6 – Wednesday, July 3RD – *Midterm Paper Due*

Writer's Toolbox Part I

Screening: ELECTION

Assignment: Screening Response, "The Tools of Screenwriting" Pages 55-71

Class 7 – Monday, July 8TH

Writer's Toolbox Part II

Screening: BEFORE SUNRISE

Assignment: Screening Response, "The Tools of Screenwriting" Pages 72-94

Class 8 – Wednesday, July 10TH

Genre Conventions

Screening: ALIEN
Assignment: Screening Response

Class 9 – Monday, July 15TH
Alternative Methods
Screening: RUSHMORE
Assignment: Screening Response

Class 10 – Wednesday, July 17TH – *Final Paper Due*
Future of Cinematic Storytelling

Screening Response Assignments

After each class, the instructor will post a topic in regards to the film that was screened and your response must be a minimum of 500 words, which is essentially one single spaced typed Word document page. The response must then be submitted to the D2L Dropbox link by the assigned due date. Due to the compressed Summer Session schedule, you will have four days to complete each response assignment.

Monday Screening Response Assignments are due on Fridays by 11:59 PM.

Wednesday Screening Response Assignments are due on Sundays by 11:59 PM.

Midterm Paper

Write a structural analysis on one of the films we have watched thus far using either Syd Field's Dramatic Paradigm or Joseph Campbell's Monomyth (Hero's Journey). The analysis should NOT be a linear retelling of the film's plot. Using Field or Campbell's theory, you must discuss the narrative devices employed throughout to build a cohesive and engaging narrative or, depending on your argument, why the film fails to develop an identifiable structure.

The paper is due via the COL Web Assignment Page by 11:59pm on Wednesday, July 3rd. No late assignments will be accepted.

A few things to keep in mind:

- The paper must be no less than four pages - MLA Formatting Required
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/1/>

- Remember, your opinion is not wrong as long as you can support it up with specific examples from the film.

- In an effort to present your work objectively, please do not use any personal pronouns when referring to your opinion, such as "I feel this film exhibits poor structure" – It is already clear you are saying it because the entire paper is your opinion.

Final Paper

Write an analysis using the Classical Hollywood storytelling conventions we have discussed throughout the quarter on one screenplay of your choosing (script list provided below). The analysis should NOT be a linear retelling of the script's plot. You must discuss the narrative devices employed throughout to build a cohesive and engaging narrative or, depending on your argument, why the current draft of the script will fail to connect with mainstream audiences. You MUST have a definitive opinion on the material and defend it with specific examples from the script that illustrate the conventions we have discussed this quarter – Don't waiver.

The paper is due via the COL Web Assignment Page by 11:59pm on Wednesday, July 17th. No late assignments will be accepted.

A few things to keep in mind:

- Remember, your opinion is not wrong as long as you can support it up with specific examples from the film.

- In an effort to present your work objectively, please do not use any personal pronouns when referring to your opinion, such as "I feel this film exhibits poor structure" – It is clear you are saying it because the entire paper is your opinion.

- The paper must be no less than four pages - MLA Formatting Required
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/1/>

Choose ONE of the following scripts for your analysis (download via the D2L Content Page):

ROBOCOP (Remake)

Genre: Action

Logline: In a crime-ridden city, a fatally wounded cop returns to the force as a powerful cyborg with subconscious memories haunting him.

INSIDE LLEWYN DAVIS

Genre: Drama/Art House

Logline: A singer/songwriter navigates New York's folk music scene during the 1960's.

BEAUTY & THE BEASTS

Genre: Family

Logline: Two years after the events of the classic tale, Belle travels to a magical land of fantastic creatures, and must restore order to the ancient kingdom if she is ever to see her true love again.

KRISTY

Genre: Horror

Logline: Follows a college coed who stays in her dorm during Thanksgiving and is terrorized by four masked assailants on the empty campus -- the killers are up against far more than they bargained for.

ELYSIUM

Genre: Sci-Fi

Logline: Set in the year 2154, where the very wealthy live on a man-made space station while the rest of the population resides on a ruined Earth, a man takes on a mission that could bring equality to the polarized worlds.

LOW SELF ESTEEM OF LIZZIE GILLESPIE

Genre: Romantic Comedy

Logline: A woman whose lack of self-worth has limited her choice in men to losers - Life takes an unexpected turn when she is pursued by the hottest guy ever.

School policies:

Online Instructor Evaluation

Evaluations are a way for students to provide valuable feedback regarding their instructor and the course. Detailed feedback will enable the instructor to continuously tailor teaching methods and course content to meet the learning goals of the course and the academic needs of the students. They are a requirement of the course and are key to continue to provide you with the highest quality of teaching. The evaluations are anonymous; the instructor and administration do not track who entered what responses. A program is used to check if the student completed the evaluations, but the evaluation is completely separate from the student's identity. Since 100%

participation is our goal, students are sent periodic reminders over two weeks. Students do not receive reminders once they complete the evaluation. Students complete the evaluation online at <https://mycti.cti.depaul.edu/mycti>

Email

Email is the primary means of communication between faculty and students enrolled in this course outside of class time. Students should be sure their email listed under "demographic information" at <http://campusconnect.depaul.edu> is correct.

Academic Integrity Policy

This course will be subject to the academic integrity policy passed by faculty. More information can be found at <http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/>

Plagiarism

The university and school policy on plagiarism can be summarized as follows: Students in this course should be aware of the strong sanctions that can be imposed against someone guilty of plagiarism. If proven, a charge of plagiarism could result in an automatic F in the course and possible expulsion. The strongest of sanctions will be imposed on anyone who submits as his/her own work any assignment which has been prepared by someone else. If you have any questions or doubts about what plagiarism entails or how to properly acknowledge source materials be sure to consult the instructor.

Incomplete

An incomplete grade is given only for an exceptional reason such as a death in the family, a serious illness, etc. Any such reason must be documented. Any incomplete request must be made at least two weeks before the final, and approved by the Dean of the College of Computing and Digital Media. Any consequences resulting from a poor grade for the course will not be considered as valid reasons for such a request.

Resources for Students with Disabilities

Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential.

To ensure that you receive the most appropriate accommodation based on your needs, contact the instructor as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week of class), and make sure that you have contacted either:

- PLuS Program (for LD, AD/HD) at 773-325-4239 in SAC 220
- The Office for Students with Disabilities (for all other disabilities) at 773-325-7290 Student Center 307