

DePaul University
School of Cinema and Interactive Media

DC 222 503/513: Hollywood Film Structures

December Intercession, 2013

MWF 4:45-8:45 PM, 14 East Jackson Lower Level Theater and Online

Professor Brad Riddell: briddell@cim.depaul.edu, 312-362-5212

Office Hours: MW 3:00-4:30 PM in CDM 506 and by appointment.

Description:

This course explores how and why movies are sewn together the way they are by examining the relationship between cinematic form and content. We will work to develop critical analytical skills with respect to narrative structure in cinema. Films of various genres and styles will be examined, as will several common structural paradigms used to both create and evaluate cinematic narratives.

Objectives:

To change the way you look at movies we will:

- examine the relationship between character and story structure
- develop familiarity with *Three Act Structure* and *The Hero's Journey*
- explore the manner in which story structure is influenced by genre
- touch on *The Sequence Approach* and *Save the Cat* paradigms
- delve into nontraditional narratives
- build a cinematic vocabulary with which to discuss films critically

Outcomes:

One (five-to-eight page) paper and four online quizzes will assess and develop student learning across the objectives above. Assignments will be drawn from the films screened in and out of class, course lectures, and the reading material posted online. Four extra credit projects will be made available.

Course Management:

This course is housed and managed on **D2L**, where both the online and in-class sections are linked together. There, you will find each week's recorded lecture (available shortly after 9 PM each day that the in-class section meets), required reading material, and all of your assignments. Also posted on D2L will be a weekly discussion forum for questions and thoughts concerning the films, the lectures, and assignments.

The films screened in class, as well as those which require individual viewing, are available on **ColTube** – an online DePaul video player available for Mac and PC.

<http://coltube.cdm.depaul.edu/ColTube/Home/>

Schedule:

Character and Three-Act Structure

CLASS 1M: Course introduction. Three-Act Structure overview.

Screen: *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (in class)

CLASS 2W: Focus on character development across three acts.

Read: *Glossary, Screenwriting Tools, What is a Screenplay, Classic Screenplay Structure*

Watch: *Tootsie* (in class) and *Mean Girls* (independently)

The Hero's Journey

CLASS 3F: The Hero's Journey Part I.

Read: *Structure and Character, Schechter on Character*

Watch: *The Silence of the Lambs* (in class)

CLASS 4M: The Hero's Journey Part II.

Read: *Vogler: The Writer's Journey, J. Campbell*

Watch: *Moon* (in class) and *Gladiator* (independently)

Ensemble Films

Class 5W: Ensemble Films Part I.

Read: *Willis and LoBrutto on DTRT*

Watch: *Do The Right Thing* (in class) and *Little Miss Sunshine* (independently)

The Sequence Approach and Save the Cat

Class 6F: Introduction to Sequences and Save the Cat.

Read: *Gulino on Sequences* and *Save the Cat Intro* by Snyder

Watch: *Thelma and Louise* (in class)

Alternative Narrative

Class 7M: Alternative Narrative Part I.

Read: Ghislotti on *Memento, Memento Mori* (short story)

Watch: *Memento* (in class)

Class 8W: Alternative Narrative Part II.

Watch: *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (in class)

Class 9F: NO CLASS MEETING! This is our scheduled course final. FINISH **ALL** OF YOUR ASSIGNMENTS BY MIDNIGHT and submit them online!

Assignments

There are five required assignments and four extra credit assignments. The four required quizzes can be found under “Quizzes” in D2L. The required essay and extra credit will be delivered using “Dropbox.” **All of the required assignments and whatever extra credit you choose to do will be due on Friday, December 20 at 11:59 PM.** I highly recommend that you not wait until the last minutes of the term to do all of this work. Four of the assignments require that you watch a movie outside of class. It is too much work to be done well all at once, and you will likely not be happy with your grade if you try.

Under “**Checklists**” on D2L you will find a checklist of requirements for each class session that will help you to keep up with the workload. I can monitor your progress according to the checklist. Keep up with the lists and you will be fine.

Assignment 1: Terms, Character development, and three-act structure quiz: 100 points

Assignment 2: *Mean Girls* three-act structure analysis quiz: 100 points

Assignment 3: The Hero’s Journey and *Gladiator* quiz: 100 points

Assignment 4: *Little Miss Sunshine* essay in Dropbox: 100 points

Assignment 5: Comprehensive Review Quiz: 100 points

Extra Credit: 15 points each, max 60 points.

Readings and lecture slides can be downloaded from “Content” on D2L. You are expected to have done the reading **before** watching or attending the lecture.

Grading:

Late work will not be accepted. These values are minimums for each grade:

A = 95 C+ = 78

A- = 92 C = 75

B+ = 88 C- = 70

B = 85 D+ = 69

B- = 80 D = 65

Laptops/Cell Phones:

If your computer and the mind attached to it drift away from class, and I so much as suspect you of online activities not related to the task at hand, you will lose laptop privileges for the entire semester. Phones must be silenced and stowed.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism:

This course will be subject to the university's academic integrity policy. More information can be found at <http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/>. If you have any questions be sure to consult with your professor. But know this: plagiarism will earn you an immediate F in this course.

Alterations:

The professor reserves the right to alter the syllabus at any time. Students will be apprised of any and all changes with clear instructions should they occur.

Academic Policies:

All students are required to manage their class schedules each term in accordance with the deadlines for enrolling and withdrawing as indicated in the [University Academic Calendar](#). Information on enrollment, withdrawal, grading and incompletes can be found at: cdm.depaul.edu/enrollment.

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 the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) at: csd@depaul.edu.

Lewis Center 1420, 25 East Jackson Blvd.

Phone number: (312)362-8002

TTY: (773)325.7296

Online Course Evaluations:

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 three weeks. Students do not receive reminders once they complete the evaluation. Students complete the evaluation online in [CampusConnect](#).