SCWR 122-520: Script to Screen

Winter Quarter 2021
Online: Asynchronous

Instructor Information

Jef Burnham
Pronouns: he/him/his
Email: jburnha1@depaul.edu*
Zoom Office Hours: Wednesday 8:30AM-10AM & 12PM-3PM (CT)

*If you do not receive a response from me within 24 hours, assume I did not get your email.

Course Overview

Course Description

This analytical course examines the screenplay's evolution to the screen from a writer's perspective. Students will read feature length scripts of varying genres and then perform a critical analysis and comparison of the text to the final produced versions of the films. Storytelling conventions such as structure, character development, theme, and the creation of tension will be used to uncover alterations and how these adjustments ultimately impacted the film's reception.

Prerequisites: None

Course Outcomes: In addition to other short writing assignments, students will complete a final analysis paper, writing at least ten pages.

Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to:
- recognize the role of the screenwriter in the creation of a film
- interpret standard screenplay format
- compare the writing styles of individual screenwriters
- relate the process in which a screenplay is developed and ultimately produced
- identify and analyze story alterations between a screenplay and its final film

In addition to these stated course learning outcomes, we will have specific outcomes within each module, available on the D2L page for each module.

Previous Course Number: DC 224

Required Readings

All required readings will be provided on D2L under Content in PDF format and readings must be completed by the date specified in the course schedule below.

Learning Domain Description

This course is included in the Liberal Studies program as a course with credit in the Arts and Literature domain. Courses in the Arts and Literature domain ask students to extend their knowledge and experience of the arts by developing their critical and reflective abilities. In these courses, students interpret and analyze particular creative works, investigate the relations of form and meaning and through critical and/or creative activity to come to experience art with greater openness, insight, and enjoyment. These courses focus on works of literature, art, theatre, or music as such, though the process of analysis may also include social and cultural issues. Students who take course in this domain choose three courses from such choices as literature, the visual arts, media arts, music, and theater. No more than two courses can be chosen from one department or program.

Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:
- Explain, in well-written prose, what a work of art is about and/or how it was produced
  - Articulate and explain the "content" of that work and/or its methodology of production.
- Comment on the relationship between form and content in a work.
  - How does the 14-line sonnet both enable and inhibit its practitioner, for example?
  - What are the generic expectations of a particular form?
  - How does an artist complicate, enrich, or subvert such expectations?
- Assess the formal aspects of their subject and put those qualities into words, using, when appropriate, specialized vocabulary employed in class and readings.
- Contextualize a work of art.
  - Do so with respect to other works of art in terms of defining its place within a broader style or genre.
  - Contextualize a work of art in terms of contemporaneous aesthetic, social, or political concerns, discussing how these might shape the work's reception and how that reception might differ amongst various peoples and historical periods.

Assessment

Grading Scale

A	93-100 %
A-	90-92 %
B+	87-89 %

B	84-86 %
B-	80-83 %
C+	77-79%
C	74-76 %
C-	70-73 %
D+	67-69 %
D	60-66 %

Grade Breakdown

Syllabus Quiz	2.5 points
Elements of a Screenplay Quiz	2.5 points
Response Papers (5 points each)	40 points
Final Paper	30 points
Discussion Board Participation (3 points each)	30 points
TOTAL	100 points possible

Response Papers

For Modules 2 through 9, students will write 8 weekly response papers exploring the changes made to a film between the week's assigned screenplay/novella and the final filmed version of that written work. The specific topic for each paper will be detailed on D2L in the corresponding module. In general, these responses must be 500-600 words in length and presented in Times New Roman 12 pt. font—approximately one single-spaced typed Word document page. File names should appear in the following format: **LastName_FirstName_Assignment**

Response Papers must be submitted to the appropriate D2L Submission Folder in PDF format by the due date/time listed on D2L.

Final Paper

For this paper, you will choose to write about one of a selection of unproduced feature film scripts. You will write a 4- to 6-page paper exploring the ways in which your chosen script would fail to satisfy audience expectations for a narrative feature film as presented, drawing on concepts from throughout the quarter. See D2L for more details about this prompt.

Papers must be double-spaced, in Times New Roman 12 pt. font, and have one-inch margins on all sides with file names formatted: **LastName_FirstName_Assignment**. Papers must be uploaded to the D2L Submissions Folder in PDF format by the date/time specified on D2L.

Notes on the Evaluation of Student Work

Individual Response Paper prompts and grading rubrics according to which written assignments are assessed will be available on D2L under Content/Submissions. In order to obtain the desired grade on any assignment, students must review and adhere to these guidelines. In general,

written work will be evaluated according to the clarity of your writing, adherence to assignment guidelines, and basic mechanics (i.e. spelling, grammar, and punctuation). Please allow up to 7-10 days for the return of graded materials.

Course Format

Each module will consist of a combination of lecturette viewings, the reading of a feature-length screenplay/novella, Discussion Board participation, screening a feature film, writing Response Papers, and/or taking quizzes. All of these will be found on our D2L course page under Content. Use the Checklist function on D2L to track your completion of these items and ensure their completion by the due dates/times listed on D2L.

Notes on Screenplays/Films

Links to all screenplays/films will be provided to you on D2L under Content. Assigned screenplays/films will be derived from a variety of genres, but some WILL include graphic language, violence, & sex of an R-rated nature. Note also that I have done my best to ensure the filmmakers' whose work we examine throughout the course reflect diversity in the film industry, though this was not always possible given the limited number of first/early draft screenplays available to us, which is necessary for your Response Papers.

Discussion Board Guidelines

Participation in each module's discussion topic is mandatory and graded. You will be expected to show your peers respect, tolerance, courtesy, open-mindedness, positive thinking and professionalism in these discussions, in keeping with DePaul's Vincentian Mission. Students exhibiting unprofessional behavior may find themselves in violation of the Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy.

As you participate in these discussions, follow these guidelines:

- **Adhere to the prompt(s).** Look for the specific instructions associated with each module's Discussion prompt. The bulk of these prompts are intended to serve as building blocks for your weekly Response Papers and failure to adhere to strictly to the prompt in your response will result in you falling behind in your work for that module. For these Discussions, you will be expected to have done the module's reading(s) prior to responding. Therefore…

- **Plan ahead and do not wait.** For your own benefit and out of respect for your peers, avoid waiting until the last minute to post your initial response to each module's prompt. This will give your peers the opportunity to engage with and learn from you, even as your early participation allows you to mutually engage with and learn from them.

- **Write with substance.** In addition to merely meeting the 200-300 word requirement for your initial Discussion posts, consider the following when posting and replying. Take the time to contribute substantively to the Discussion in your initial response and replies to your peers both. Be specific in referencing the readings and lectures in your responses, and in your replies to your peers, go beyond merely agreeing/disagreeing and actively engage intellectually with their ideas to push this discussion forward. And be sure to read all replies to a peer's initial post before responding to ensure that you're not merely echoing other sentiments posted in that thread.

- **Think of this as you would small group discussions in the classroom.** I'll be wandering in and out of conversations, responding to some things and not hearing others as your conversations develop. This is your chance to talk to each other and LEARN from one another! However, know that I will be reading all your posts in time, so be respectful, thoughtful and thorough in your discussion posts knowing that I am popping in and out throughout the week.

Course Policies

Late Work

Assignments/Discussions must be completed and uploaded to the appropriate D2L Submission Folder by the date and time specified. **<u>Any Response Paper submitted late will receive a 1.5 point grade deduction for each day it is late</u>. All Quizzes, Discussions, and your Final Papers, however, must be completed by the assigned due date/time or you will receive a grade of zero.** Submissions by email will not be accepted given that we will be using Turnitin Originality Check throughout the course. I also suggest backing up your work online as computers crash.

Changes to Syllabus

This syllabus is subject to change as necessary during the quarter. If a change occurs, it will be thoroughly addressed during class, posted under Announcements in D2L and sent via email.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

This course will be subject to the university's academic integrity policy. More information can be found at https://offices.depaul.edu/academic-affairs/faculty-resources/academic-integrity/Documents/Academic%20Integrity%20Policy_Spring%202016.pdf

If the instructor finds a student has violated the Academic Integrity Policy/plagiarized their work, the student will fail the course, receiving an automatic F grade. (Note: Turnitin is used to check the originality of submissions on D2L.) Actions taken by the instructor in this regard do not preclude the university from taking further action, including dismissal from the university.

DePaul 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: http://www.cdm.depaul.edu/Current%20Students/Pages/PoliciesandProcedures.aspx

Incomplete Grades

An incomplete grade is a special, temporary grade that may be assigned by an instructor when unforeseeable circumstances prevent a student from completing course requirements by the end of the term and when otherwise the student had a record of satisfactory progress in the course. All incomplete requests must be approved by the instructor of the course and a CDM Associate Dean. Only exceptions cases will receive such approval. Information about the Incomplete Grades policy can be found at http://www.cdm.depaul.edu/Current%20Students/Pages/Grading-Policies.aspx

Preferred Name & Gender Pronouns

Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the quarter so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. Please also note that students may choose to identify within the University community with a preferred first name that differs from their legal name and may also update their gender. The preferred first name will appear in University related systems and documents except where the use of the legal name is necessitated or required by University business or legal need. For more information and instructions on how to do so, please see the Student Preferred Name and Gender Policy at policies.depaul.edu/policy/policy.aspx?pid=332

Accommodations

Students with Disabilities

Students seeking disability-related accommodations are required to register with DePaul's Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) enabling them to access accommodations and support services to assist with their success. There are two office locations:

- Loop Campus – Lewis Center #1420 – (312) 362-8002
- Lincoln Park Campus – Student Center #370 – (773) 325-1677

Students who register with the Center for Students with Disabilities are also invited to contact Dr. Gregory Moorhead, Director of the Center, privately to discuss how he may assist in

facilitating the accommodations to be used in a course. This is best done early in the term. The conversation will remain confidential to the extent possible.

Please see https://offices.depaul.edu/student-affairs/about/departments/Pages/csd.aspx for Services and Contact Information.

Additional Accommodations

This course may include instructional content delivered via audio and video. If you have any concerns about your ability to access and/or understand this material in its default format, please notify me within the first week of the course so accommodations can be made.

Assistance with Writing – The Writing Center

Consider contacting or visiting the Writing Center to discuss your writing. Writing Center tutors are undergrad and graduate students across disciplines who would love to help you at any stage of the writing process with any kind of writing you're working on. In each appointment, tutors collaborate with you to set an agenda focused on one, two, or three specific topics for revision. Online appointments are available through audio and video or text-based chat or through written feedback where you upload a draft and a tutor provides feedback that is emailed to you. All writing center services are free.

Schedule your appointments on a weekly or as-needed basis, and bring your assignment sheets and other relevant materials to your appointments.

Online Course Evaluations

At the end of this course, you will be provided with the opportunity to evaluate this course. Course evaluations provide valuable feedback that can improve teaching and learning. The greater the level of participation, the more useful the results. As students, you are in the unique position to view the instructor over time. Your comments about what works and what doesn't can help faculty build on the elements of the course that are strong and improve those that are weak. Isolated comments from students and instructors' peers may also be helpful, but evaluation results based on high response rates may be statistically reliable (believable). As you experience this course and material, think about how your learning is impacted. Your honest opinions about your experience in and commitment to the course and your learning may help improve some components of the course for the next group of students. Positive comments also show the department chairs and college deans the commitment of instructors to the university and teaching evaluation results are one component used in annual performance reviews (including salary raises and promotion/tenure). The evaluation of the instructor and course provides you an opportunity to make your voice heard on an important issue – the quality of teaching at DePaul. Don't miss this opportunity to provide feedback!

Course Schedule

Module 1 (1/4 – 1/10)

- o **Lecturettes**
    1. What is a Screenplay?
    2. Elements of a Screenplay

- o **Participation:** Module 1 Discussion
    - o Initial Post – Due 1/7 at 11:59PM (CT)
    - o Peer Replies – Due 1/9 at 11:59PM (CT)

- o **Assignments Due**
    1. Syllabus Quiz – Due 1/10 at 11:59PM (CT)
    2. Elements of a Screenplay Quiz – Due 1/10 at 11:59PM (CT)

Module 2 (1/11 – 1/17)

- o **Lecturette:** Feature Film Development

- o **Read:** *All You Need is Kill* Screenplay

- o **Participation:** Module 2 Discussion
    - o Initial Post – Due 1/14 at 11:59PM (CT)
    - o Peer Replies – Due 1/16 at 11:59PM (CT)

- o **Screen:** *Edge of Tomorrow* (Dir. Doug Liman, 2014)

- o **Assignment Due:** Response Paper 1
    - o Due 1/17 at 11:59PM (CT)

Module 3 (1/18 – 1/24)

- o **Lecturettes**
    1. Effective Cinematic
    2. Conventional Cinematic Structure

- o **Read:** *You've Got Mail* Screenplay

- o **Participation:** Module 3 Discussion
    - o Initial Post – Due 1/21 at 11:59PM (CT)
    - o Peer Replies – Due 1/23 at 11:59PM (CT)

- **Screen:** *You've Got Mail* (Dir. Nora Ephron, 1998)

- **Assignment Due:** Response Paper 2
  - Due 1/24 at 11:59PM (CT)

Module 4 (1/25 – 1/31)

- **Lecturettes**
  1. Character Types
  2. Understanding Character

- **Read:** *The Craft* Screenplay

- **Participation:** Module 4 Discussion
  - Initial Post – Due 1/28 at 11:59PM (CT)
  - Peer Replies – Due 1/30 at 11:59PM (CT)

- **Screen:** *The Craft* (Dir. Andrew Fleming, 1996)

- **Assignment Due:** Response Paper 3
  - Due 1/31 at 11:59PM (CT)

Module 5 (2/1 – 2/7)

- **Lecturettes**
  1. Theme
  2. It's Never "Just a Movie"

- **Read:** *Booksmart* Screenplay

- **Participation:** Module 5 Discussion
  - Initial Post – Due 2/4 at 11:59PM (CT)
  - Peer Replies – Due 2/6 at 11:59PM (CT)

- **Screen:** *Booksmart* (Dir. Olivia Wilde, 2019)

- **Assignment Due:** Response Paper 4
  - Due 2/7 at 11:59PM (CT)

Module 6 (2/8 – 2/14)

- o **Lecturettes**
  3. Tension & Narrative Causality
  4. 5 Types of Tension

- o **Read:** *The Invitation* Screenplay

- o **Participation:** Module 6 Discussion
  - o Initial Post – Due 2/11 at 11:59PM (CT)
  - o Peer Replies – Due 2/13 at 11:59PM (CT)

- o **Screen:** *The Invitation* (Dir. Karyn Kusama, 2015)

- o **Assignment Due:** Response Paper 5
  - o Due 2/14 at 11:59PM (CT)

Module 7 (2/15 – 2/21)

- o **Lecturettes**
  1. Genre & Audience Expectations
  2. Traditional Genre Perspectives

- o **Read:** *Toy Story 3* Screenplay

- o **Participation:** Module 7 Discussion
  - o Initial Post – Due 2/18 at 11:59PM (CT)
  - o Peer Replies – Due 2/20 at 11:59PM (CT)

- o **Screen:** *Toy Story 3* (Dir. Lee Unkrich, 2010)

- o **Assignment Due:** Response Paper 6
  - o Due 2/21 at 11:59PM (CT)

Module 8 (2/22 – 2/28)

- o **Lecturettes**
  1. Unity
  2. Alternative Approaches to Protagonist & Structure

- o **Read:** *Do the Right Thing* Screenplay

- **Participation:** Module 8 Discussion
  - Initial Post – Due 2/25 at 11:59PM (CT)
  - Peer Replies – Due 2/27 at 11:59PM (CT)

- **Screen:** *Do the Right Thing* (Dir. Spike Lee, 1989)

- **Assignment Due:** Response Paper 7
  - Due 2/28 at 11:59PM (CT)

Module 9 (3/1 – 3/7)
- **Lecturettes**
  1. Final Paper
  2. Adaptations & Remakes

- **Read:** "The Shadow over Innsmouth" (1936) novella by H.P. Lovecraft

- **Participation:** Module 9 Discussion
  - Initial Post – Due 3/4 at 11:59PM (CT)
  - Peer Replies – Due 3/6 at 11:59PM (CT)

- **Screen:** *Cthulhu* (Dir. Dan Gildark, 2007)

- **Assignment Due:** Response Paper 8
  - Due 3/7 at 11:59PM (CT)

Module 10 (3/8 – 3/14)
- **Lecturette:** Development Hell

- **Participation:** Module 10 Discussion
  - Initial Post – Due 3/11 at 11:59PM (CT)
  - Peer Replies – Due 3/12 at 11:59PM (CT)

Final Paper
Due by Monday, 3/15 at 11:59PM (CT).
Upload to the Final Paper D2L Submission Folder in PDF format.