

DC 222 Classic Hollywood Film Structure

Spring 2014 | Tuesday 1:30-4:45 | 14 E. Jackson 801

Instructor: Wendy Roderweiss Office: CDM 460

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Office hours: 11:45-1:15 Tuesdays and by appointment

April 11, 2014 Last day to drop classes with no penalty

May 16, 2014 Last day to withdraw from SQ2014 classes

This syllabus is subject to change.

Course Description:

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. PREREQUISITE(S): NONE

By the end of the term students will:

- critically analyze films focusing on the filmmakers' strategies for crafting engaging, tension filled stories.
- identify and develop an understanding of how characters are constructed in film and what tools are utilized in writing to create a bond between the protagonist and the audience.
- Demonstrate an understanding of multiple approaches to feature film structure by studying numerous film theorists and incorporating these techniques in the writing process.

Learning Domain Description:

DC222 Classic Hollywood Film Structure 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:

1. Students will be able to explain, in well-written prose, what a work of art is about and/or how it was produced.
2. Students will be able to comment on the relationship between form and content in a work.

3. Students will be able to assess the formal aspects of their subject and put those qualities into words, using, when appropriate, specialized vocabulary employed in class and readings.
4. Students will be able to contextualize a work of art. They will be able to do so with respect to other works of art in terms of defining its place within a broader style or genre. They will also be able to 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.

How learning Outcomes Will Be Met

One long paper and four shorter assignments will assess and develop student learning across the objectives above. Assignments will be drawn from the films screened in class, course lectures, and the reading material posted online. Students will be expected to watch additional films not screened in class. Four extra credit projects will be made available throughout the quarter.

Writing Expectations

Students will be expected to complete a minimum of 5-7 pages of writing for this course.

How Writing Expectations Will be Met

Assignment #2: A 3-act structure breakdown of a selected film, with minute by minute plot elements, identification of act breaks, the midpoint and the characters super-objective or dramatic need.

Assignment #4: A 6-8 page paper analyzing a script and corresponding film to determine if the film is, or is not, an ensemble film as outlined in class lectures and in course readings.

Course Management:

This course is housed and managed on **D2L**. There, you will find each week's recorded lecture (available after 5:30 PM on Tuesdays), the required reading material, most of our assignments, and, as the semester progresses – your current grade. Also posted on D2L will be a weekly discussion forum for questions and thoughts concerning the films, lectures, assignments and the course itself.

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/>

Textbooks and printed resources

All reading required for this course will be provided via D2L.

Software needed to complete assignments:

Word processing program for written assignments.

Laptops/Cell Phones:

Use of cell phones in the class is prohibited. Please turn your phone off before entering class. Mistakes will happen (to me too), but repeated failure to turn your phone off will result in a lowered grade for the class and confiscation of the device during the class period. NO

TEXTING! Laptops/ipads are also not allowed in class unless you have a university sanctioned reason for using one.

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.

Grading:

ASSIGNMENTS: There are five assignments that will be posted on D2L. Late work will not be accepted.

Assignment #1 Quiz 18%

Assignment #2 Three Act Structure Breakdown & Quiz 18%

Assignment #3 Quiz 18%

Assignment #4 Paper 26%

Assignment #5 Comprehensive Quiz 20%

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

Standards for Achievement:

Grade A:

Student performs in an outstanding way. Student exhibits achievement and craftsmanship in all work. Student exhibits commitment to expanding ideas, vocabulary and performance.

Grade B:

Student performs beyond the requirement of the project. Student exhibits above average progress and craftsmanship. Student exhibits above average interest in expanding idea, vocabulary, and performance.

Grade C:

Criteria of assignment is met, and all requirements are fulfilled. Student shows average quality work and minimum time and effort on projects. Student shows moderate interest.

Grade D:

Student performance is uneven and below average. Requirements for projects are only partially fulfilled. Minimal interest is shown and attendance, participation and involvement are inadequate.

Grade F

Student fails to meet minimum course requirements and shows no interest. Levels of participation and craftsmanship are extremely poor. Student's attendance is inadequate.

Schedule:

Character and Three-Act Structure

Week 1: 4/1

Course introduction, story terms and concepts, clips

Week 2: 4/8

Three Act Structure Lecture

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest

ASSIGNMENT ONE DUE (*on lectures/reading/scenes*) BY 5:30PM ON FRIDAY 4/11

Week 3: 4/15

Breakdown of Cuckoo's Nest

3 act structure movie tbd

The Hero's Journey

Week 4: 4/22

The Silence of the Lambs

ASSIGNMENT TWO (*on Zero Effect*) DUE BY 5:30PM ON FRIDAY 4/25

Week 5: 4/29

Wonderboys

Ensemble

Week 6: 5/6

Safety Not Guaranteed

ASSIGNMENT THREE (*FILM TBD*) DUE BY 5:30PM ON FRIDAY 5/9

Week 7: 5/13

The Philadelphia Story

The Sequence Approach and Save the Cat

Week 8: 5/20

Sequence film TBD

Alternative Narrative

Week 9: 5/27

Alternative Narrative film TBD

ASSIGNMENT FOUR (*Lars and the Real Girl*) DUE BY 5:30PM ON FRIDAY 5/30

Week 10: 6/3

Alternative Narrative film TBD

ASSIGNMENT FIVE (*Comprehensive*) DUE BY 5:30PM ON **TUESDAY 6/10**

Course Policies (from the university)

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.

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](#).

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.

Excused Absence

In order to petition for an excused absence, students who miss class due to illness or significant personal circumstances should complete the Absence Notification process through the Dean of Students office. The form can be accessed at <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/dos/forms.html>. Students must submit supporting documentation alongside the form. The professor reserves the sole right whether to offer an excused absence and/or academic accommodations for an excused absence.

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.

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