

DC 222 Classic Hollywood Film Structure

Spring 2014 | Monday 5:45pm – 9pm | 14 East Jackson LL105

Instructor: James Choi

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Office Hours: Monday 1:30pm – 3pm 14 East Jackson LL105 or by appointment

**April 11, 2014 Last 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

Course Objectives

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

Weekly papers will assess and develop student learning across the objectives above. Writing assignments will be drawn from the films screened in class, course lectures, and the reading material posted online. Students will break down 5 films into the classic 3 act structure and also analyze films based on character, theme, camera and point of view.

Writing Expectations

Students will be expected to complete a minimum of 7-10 pages of writing for this course.

How Writing Expectations Will be Met

Weekly papers will require students to analyze films based on the topics of discussions from previous class lectures and viewing of the films. Students will be required to write two papers based on two different screenwriting approaches: Blake Snyder's *Save The Cat* and Joseph Campbell's *Hero's Journey*.

Course Management

This course is housed and managed on **COLWeb**. There, you will find each week's recorded lecture (available after 10PM on Mondays), the required reading material, most of our assignments, and, as the semester progresses – your current grade.

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 Colweb.

Suggested Readings:

The Tools of Screenwriting by David Howard and Edward Mabley

The Hero With a Thousand Faces by Joseph Campbell

Screenplay by Syd Field

Save the Cat by Blake Snyder

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 weekly writing assignments that will be posted on COLweb. Late work will not be accepted.

Grading:

(30%) Weekly Writing Exercises
(15%) Three Act Structure Breakdown
(15%) Script/Film Comparison Paper
(40%) Final Paper
(15%) Attendance/Participation

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.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week 1 – 3/31: Structure

In-Class: Review Syllabus
In-Class: Structure Presentation & Discussion
In-Class: Watch Film 1

Week 2 – 4/7: Character

***Due: Film 1 Three Act Structure Breakdown**

In-Class: Discuss Film 1
In-Class: Character Presentation & Discussion
In-Class: Watch Film 2

Week 3 – 4/14: Theme/Tension

***Due: Film 2 Structure Breakdown / Character Analysis**

In Class: Discuss Film 2
In-Class: Theme/Tension Presentation & Discussion
In-Class: Watch Film 3

Week 4 – 4/21: Camera/Rhythm

***Due: Film 3 Structure Breakdown / Theme Analysis**

In-Class: Discuss Film 3
In-Class: Camera/Rhythm Presentation & Discussion
In-Class: Watch Film 4

Week 5 – 4/28: Non-Linear/Ensemble Films

***Due: Film 4 Structure Breakdown / Camera Analysis**

In Class: Discuss Film 4
In-Class: Non-Linear/Ensemble Films Presentation & Discussion
In-Class: Watch Film 5

Week 6 – 5/5: Script to Screen

***Due: Film 5 Structure Breakdown / Ensemble Analysis**

In-Class: Discuss Film 5

In-Class: Script to Screen Presentation & Discussion

In-Class: Watch Film 6 (and read script)

Week 7 – 5/12: Blake Snyder's *Save the Cat*/A different approach to principles of structure

***Due: Paper #1: Script to Film Comparison**

In-Class: Discuss Film 6 and script

In-Class: Blake Snyder Presentation & Discussion

In-Class: Watch Film 7

Week 8 – 5/19: Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey

***Due: Film 7 Blake Snyder Approach Analysis**

In-Class: Discussion of *Film 7*

In-Class: Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey Presentation & Discussion

In-Class: Watch Film 8

Week 9 – 5/26: Non-Structured/Experimental

***Due: Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey Analysis**

In-Class: Discussion of Film 8

In-Class: Non-structured/Experimental Presentation & Discussion

In-Class: View Film 9

Week 10 – 6/2: Orson Welles' *Citizen Kane*

***Due: Non-Structured/Experimental Analysis**

Last week we will screen AFI's #1 film, *Citizen Kane*. It is a film regarded by numerous "best of" film lists to be the best film EVER made.

In-Class: Discussion of Film 9

In-Class: Viewing of *Citizen Kane*

June 9 | FINALS | 5:45pm – 9pm
Final Papers due on COL by 12am Midnight

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.

Lewis Center 1420, 25 East Jackson Blvd.

Phone number: (312)362-8002

Fax: (312)362-6544

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