

DePaul University
School of Cinema and Interactive Media

DC 222 601/610: Hollywood Film Structures

Spring 2015

T, 1:30-4:45 PM, 14 East Jackson, Room 801

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

Office Hours: T 10-11:30 AM, W 2-3:30 PM and by appointment.

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.

Course Description:

DC 222 explores the question of how and why movies are sewn together the way they are, by examining the relationship between cinematic form and content. How does the way in which a film is made affect what we as an audience take away from it? Through this discussion we will work to develop 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 as a counterpoint to "classic" structure.
- build a cinematic vocabulary with which to discuss films critically.

Outcomes:

One (six-to-eight page) paper and four online short-answer essay 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. Two 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 the in-class section meets), required reading material, checklists, a calendar, 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**

Week 1: Course introduction. What is a movie? Discuss key dramatic terms.

Screen: *Lars and the Real Girl* (in class)

Week 2: Three-Act Structure overview.

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

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

Week 3: Character development across three acts.

Read: *Structure and Character, Schechter on Character, Tootsie: Mixed Messages*

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

Tuesday, April 21 at 1:30 PM, Assignment 1 and 2 Quizzes are due on D2L.

The Hero's Journey

Week 4: The Hero's Journey Part I.

Read: *J. Campbell from The Hero With a Thousand Faces*

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

Week 5: The Hero's Journey Part II.

Read: *Vogler: The Writer's Journey*

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

Tuesday, May 5 at 1:30 PM, Assignment 3 Quiz is due on D2L.

Ensemble Films

Week 6: Ensemble Films.

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

Week 7: 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

Week 8: Alternative Narrative Part I.

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

Watch: *Memento* (in class)

Tuesday, May 19 at 1:30 PM, Assignment 4 Essay due in Dropbox on D2L.

Week 9: Alternative Narrative Part II.

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

Review

Week 10: Quarter Review with a final film TBD.

Tuesday, June 2 at 1:30 PM, Extra Credit is due in Dropbox on D2L.

Tuesday, June 9 at 1:30 PM, Assignment 5 is due in Dropbox on D2L.

Assignments

There are five required assignments and two 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.” Quizzes and Dropboxes will close at the assigned time.

Under “**Checklists**” on D2L you will find a checklist of requirements for each class session that will help you to keep up with the schedule. 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: Two assignments worth a total of 25 points each.

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.

No Textbook required!

Grading:

Late work will rarely be accepted. 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.

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. I'm serious.

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. It has happened before, so please don't let it happen again.

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.