

Course: DC 205, Foundations of Cinema

Instructor: Dan Pal

Email: [dpal@cdm.depaul.edu](mailto:dpal@cdm.depaul.edu)

Office: Daley 200B

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 12 PM – 1:15 PM, 4:45-6:00 PM; Thursdays 12 PM – 1:30 PM

### **Summary**

This course will examine the craft, technology, and aesthetic principles of media production. Drawing heavily on a wide array of historical examples, the course will examine the many expressive strategies potentially usable in the creation of moving image art forms: the importance of story and controlling ideas, storytelling with images, the basics of composition and editing, and an examination of narrative, documentary, and experimental approaches. In addition to analyzing the works of others, students will also produce their own projects thus, putting theory into practice.

### **Required Text:**

REQUIRED: Film Art: An Introduction by Bordwell & Thompson,  
ISBN # 978-0-07-353510-4

### **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 (i.e. they should be able to articulate and explain the “content” of that work and/or its methodology of production).
2. Students will be able to comment on the relationship between form and content in a work. What are the generic expectations of a particular form? How does an artist complicate, enrich, or subvert such expectations?
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**

1. Explain and evaluate, in written form, the uses of key film concepts such as pre-production, cinematography, editing, and sound through the critical examination of key films.
2. Recognize the methods used in creating various narrative forms (i.e. classical, documentary, experimental) and compare and contrast these to specific films and the writers and directors who create them.
3. Implement course concepts by constructing a narrative and producing a work that applies such ideas and techniques as shot composition, mis-en-scene, and editing.
4. Deconstruct the audience reception of various films over time based on social changes, box office, popular, and artistic demands. Explain why certain films get produced.

**Writing Expectations:**

A minimum of 5-7 pages of writing for courses in the Arts and Literature domain (including studio courses) is required.

**How Writing Expectations Will Be Met**

Discussion Questions - pertaining to films to be seen out of class

Screen Story: Students will write a screen story, using Classical Hollywood narrative structure.

**Grading**

Class Participation on Discussion Board – 2 pts x 10 weeks = 20 pts.

Discussion Questions - 5 pts. x 9 films = 45 pts.

Screen Story – 10 pts.

Digital Still/Storyboard Assignment – 15 pts.

Final Digital Project – 30 pts.

Course grades will be calculated as follows:

120 points are possible. 108-120 = A, 96-107 = B, 84-95 = C, 72-83=D, 71 & below = F

**Assignments****Participation:**

Each student is expected to contribute weekly to the course Discussion Board on D2L.

Two points will be given each week if the student has made two or more relevant contributions that week. (Total possible = 20 points.) Contributions can include starting a new post and/or commenting on another student's post. There will be suggested areas for

discussion each week on the Discussions page. All contributions must relate to that week's topic and film. This assignment is not meant to be the place to submit answers for the Discussion Questions assignment. Rather students should view Participation as a forum to discuss and debate their answers but also to raise new questions, ideas, and observations about the films and topics. Note that the total points for participation cannot be achieved until the end of the quarter. Totals will build each week. Failure to contribute relevant postings by the due date and time each week will not advance a student's points for that week. Therefore, for instance, if a student does not make two relevant posts in week 1, that student will always be at least 2 points shy of the total possible participation points (20.)

#### Discussion Questions:

The purpose of this assignment is to begin developing your critical thinking skills by examining films required for this course. There will be five specific film elements I will want you to examine for each film. Answers must be submitted in .doc or .pdf format online by the due date. Late assignments will not be accepted. You will receive five points for each correctly completed set of discussion questions. Missing answers or incorrectly answering questions will result in a deduction of points. Overall length for each assignment must be a minimum of one complete page. Less than this will also result in a reduction of points.

Screen Story: Students will write a screen story, using Classical Hollywood narrative structure.

Digital Still/Storyboard Assignment: Shoot the still pictures or storyboard for one scene of your film story.

Final Digital Project: Incorporate course concepts to digitally tell your screen story. The final project can be in the form of a short 5-10 minute film or a series of digital stills that tell your whole story. You must use a minimum of 10 different camera angles/points of view. You must also incorporate a minimum of 5 editing transitions covered in class. You must also use appropriate sounds and music.

***Student plagiarism and/or cheating will result in a sanction ranging from a loss in points, to failure for the assignment, up to failure in the course.***

Weekly discussion assignments and posts will be evaluated with 48 hours of due date/time. Longer assignments will be evaluated within one week. Replies to personal emails will occur within 24 hours (48 hours on weekends.)

#### **Students with Disabilities**

Students seeking disability-related accommodations are required to register with DePaul's Center for Students with Disabilities(CSD), enabling you to access accommodations and support services to assist in your success. There are two office locations that can provide you with enrollment information, or you can inquire via email at [csd@depaul.edu](mailto:csd@depaul.edu).

Loop Campus - Lewis Center #1420 -(312) 362 - 8002

Lincoln Park Campus - Student Center #370 -(773) 325-1677

Students are also invited to contact me privately to discuss your needs and how I may assist in facilitating the accommodations you will require during this course. This is best done early in the term and our conversation will remain confidential.

For information on accessibility issues related to Desire2Learn, visit the accessibility section of the D2L website

### **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.

### **Plagiarism and Academic Integrity**

***Student plagiarism and/or cheating will result in a sanction ranging from a loss in points, to failure for the assignment, up to failure in the course.***

All students should be familiar with DePaul's academic integrity policy and resources before beginning course assignments. Students in this course should be aware of the strong sanctions that can be imposed against someone guilty of plagiarism. If proven, a charge of plagiarism could result in an automatic F in the course and possible expulsion. The strongest of sanctions will be imposed on anyone who submits as his/her own work any assignment that has been prepared by someone else. If you have any questions or doubts about what plagiarism entails or how to properly acknowledge source materials, be sure to consult the instructor.

### **Incompletes**

An incomplete grade is given only for an exceptional reason such as a death in the family or a serious illness. Any such reason must be documented, and incomplete requests must be made at least two weeks before the final exam period.