

# DC 224-601 Script to Screen

Spring 2016 | Wednesday 1:30pm – 4:45pm | 14EAST 214

Instructor: James Choi

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Office Hours: Monday 1:20pm – 5:00pm / Wednesday 11:00 am – 1:20pm in CDM Room 515 or by appointment

\*\*This syllabus is subject to change

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## Course Description:

Critical analysis of successful films and their narrative structures. 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 and climax. 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.

PREREQUISITE(S):NONE

## Course Objectives:

By the end of the term students will:

- Critically analyze films focusing on the screenwriter's 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:

DC224 Script to Screen 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 written and 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 and scripts read outside of 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 10 pages of writing for this course.

**How Writing Expectations Will be Met:**

Weekly papers will require students to analyze films/scripts 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 Sid Field's 3 Act Structure

**Course Management:**

This course is housed and managed on D2L. There, you will find each week's recorded lecture (available an hour after each scheduled class), the assignments and as the semester progresses – your current grade.

For those taking the class online, the films screened will be available for individual viewing, on ColTube – an online DePaul video player available for Mac and PC.

<http://coltube.cdm.depaul.edu/ColTube/Home/>

**Suggested Readings:**

Writing Movies for Fun and Profit by Robert Ben Garant and Thomas Lennon  
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.

**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 D2L. Late work will not be accepted.

(60%) Weekly Writing Assignments

(20%) Final Paper

(20%) Attendance/Participation ([Online students will have to answer weekly lecture questions](#))

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

**Attendance:**

Attendance is mandatory. An absence is defined as not showing up for class, or arriving more than 15 minutes late or missing any 15 minute period during class time. I take attendance every class. 3 absences for any reason, whether excused or not, may constitute failure for the course.

**\*\*Online students: There will be weekly questions based on discussions/lectures posted on D2L which need to be answered and submitted weekly by online students. This will account for 20% of your attendance and participation grade\*\***

**D2L**

You will be using D2L extensively in this course. You will find links to the syllabus, course outline, video lectures, discussion forums, weekly assignments, etc.

**\*\* All lectures and films will be viewable through D2L**

**Course Policies (from the University):****Laptops/Cell Phones:**

We won't generally need to have laptops open in this class. But if they are, 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.

**Attitude**

A professional and academic attitude is expected throughout this course. Measureable examples of non-academic or unprofessional attitude include but are not limited to: talking to others when the instructor is speaking, mocking other's opinions, cell phones ringing, emailing, texting or using internet. If any of these issues arise a student may be asked to leave the classroom.

**Decorum and Civil Discourse**

DePaul University is a community that thrives on open discourse that challenges students, both intellectually and personally, to be Socially Responsible Leaders. It is the expectation that all dialogue in this course is civil and respectful of the dignity of each student. Any instances of disrespect or hostility can jeopardize a student's ability to be successful in the course. The professor will partner with the Dean of Students Office to assist in managing such issues. Cell Phones/On Call: If you bring a cell phone to class, it must be off or set to a silent mode. Should you need to answer a call during class, students must leave the room in an undistruptive manner. Out of respect to fellow students and the professor, texting is never allowable in class. If you are required to be on call as part of your job, please advise me at the start of the course.

**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 and posted under announcements on D2L.

**Online Course Evaluations**

Instructor and 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!

### **Academic Integrity and Plagiarism**

This course will be subject to the academic integrity policy passed by faculty. More information can be found at <http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/>.

The university and school policy on plagiarism can be summarized as follows: 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 which 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.

### **Withdrawal**

Students who withdraw from the course do so by using the Campus Connection system

(<http://campusconnect.depaul.edu>). Withdrawals processed via this system are effective the day on which they are made. Simply ceasing to attend, or notifying the instructor, or nonpayment of tuition, does not constitute an official withdrawal from class and will result in academic as well as financial penalty.

### **Retroactive Withdrawal**

This policy exists to assist students for whom extenuating circumstances prevented them from meeting the withdrawal deadline. During their college career students may be allowed one medical/personal administrative withdrawal and one college office administrative withdrawal, each for one or more courses in a single term. Repeated requests will not be considered. Submitting an appeal for retroactive withdrawal does not guarantee approval.

College office appeals for CDM students must be submitted online via MyCDM. The deadlines for submitting appeals are as follows:

Autumn Quarter: Last day of the last final exam of the subsequent winter quarter  
Winter Quarter: Last day of the last final exam of the subsequent spring quarter  
Spring Quarter: Last day of the last final exam of the subsequent autumn quarter  
Summer Terms: Last day of the last final exam of the subsequent autumn quarter

### **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.

### **Incomplete**

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. CDM policy requires the student to initiate the request for incomplete grade before the end of the term in which the course is taken. Prior to submitting the incomplete request, the student must discuss the circumstances with the instructor. Students may initiate the incomplete request

process in MyCDM.

- All incomplete requests must be approved by the instructor of the course and a CDM Associate Dean. Only exceptions cases will receive such approval.
- If approved, students are required to complete all remaining course requirement independently in consultation with the instructor by the deadline indicated on the incomplete request form.
- By default, an incomplete grade will automatically change to a grade of F after two quarters have elapsed (excluding summer) unless another grade is recorded by the instructor.
- An incomplete grade does NOT grant the student permission to attend the same course in a future quarter.

### 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](mailto:csd@depaul.edu).  
Lewis Center 1420, 25 East Jackson Blvd.  
Phone number: (312)362-8002  
Fax: (312)362-6544  
TTY: (773)325.7296

### CLASS SCHEDULE (Subject to Change)

#### Class 1 (3/30)

In-Class: Review Syllabus

In-Class: Introduction and watch Film 1

#### Class 2 (4/06)

In-Class: Discuss Film 1 and 3 Act Structure Lecture

In-Class: Watch Film 2

[Assignment: 3 Act Structure Breakdown](#)

#### Class 3 (4/13)

[Due: Film 1 3 Act Structure Breakdown](#)

In-Class: Discuss Film 2

In-Class: Character Lecture

In-Class: Watch Film 3

[Assignment: 3 Act Structure Breakdown and Character Analysis](#)

#### Class 4 (4/20)

[\\*Due: Film 2 Structure Breakdown / Character Analysis](#)

In Class: Discuss Film 3

In-Class: Theme/Tension Lecture

In-Class: Watch Film 4

[Assignment: 3 Act Structure Breakdown / Tension Analysis](#)

Class 5 (4/27)

[\\*Due: Film 4 Structure Breakdown / Tension Analysis](#)

In-Class: Discuss Film 4

In-Class: Filmmakers Toolbox Lecture

In-Class: Watch Film 5

[Assignment: Filmmakers Toolbox Analysis](#)

Class 6 (5/4)

[\\*Due: Film 5 Filmmakers Toolbox Analysis](#)

In-Class: Discuss Film 5

In-Class: Different Approach to Structure, Save the Cat Lecture

In-Class: Watch Film 6

[Assignment: Save the Cat Beat Sheet](#)

Class 7 (5/11)

[Due: Film 6 Beat Sheet](#)

In Class: Discuss Film 6

In-Class: Script to Screen Lecture

In-Class: Watch Film 7

[Assignment: Script to Film Analysis](#)

Class 8 (5/18)

[Due: Film 7 Script to Film Analysis](#)

In-Class: Discuss Film 7

In-Class: Watch Film 8

[Assignment: Script to Film Analysis](#)

Class 9 (5/25)

[Due: Film 8 Script to Film Analysis](#)

In-Class: Discuss Film 8

In-Class: Watch Final Paper Film

[Assignment: Script to Film Analysis](#)

Class 10 (6/1)

[\\*\\*Due: Film 9 Script to Film Analysis\\*\\*](#)

In-Class: Watch Film 10 (Film for Final Paper)

**\*\*FINAL – 6/6 – 11:30pm – 1:45pm\*\***