

Script to Screen - Autumn - 2016

DC 224 - 401

Tuesday 1:30 - 4:45pm

CDM Center 243 Wabash Ave. Room 708

Instructor: Lee Madsen

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Office hours: Tuesday 12-2PM - Thursday 5-7:30 CDM Building - 243 Wabash Ave. 4th Floor, Office 434

Summary of the Course

This analytical course examines the screenplay's evolution to the screen from a writer's perspective. 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.

Learning Outcomes

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

Prerequisites: None

D2L: You will be using D2L extensively in this course.

Required Reading: PDFs of assigned screenplays will be posted on D2L.

Homework: DO NOT EMAIL YOUR ASSIGNMENTS TO ME. Unless otherwise instructed all assignments are due to be submitted on D2L.

Assignments should be typed and double-spaced in 12- point font.

Grading

Script Coverage & Midterm Essay 60% / Post Screening Discussion/Participation 20% / Final Reading 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. A indicates excellence, B indicates good work, C indicates satisfactory work, D work is unsatisfactory in some respect, F is substantially unsatisfactory work.

Script to Screen Schedule

Class 1 Tuesday Sept. 12th

Lecture: Class overview. Screenwriting basics. Script Coverage.

In Class Screening: Finding Joe.

Homework: Read "Anchorman" and write Script Coverage for "Anchorman" due on D2L before Class 2 begins. (all of the scripts we read will be posted on D2L).

Homework: D2L Discussion Board post topic - Screenwriting basics

Class 2

Due: Anchorman script coverage

Due: Discussion Board Topic

Lecture: Cinematic Storytelling Conventions. Comedy & Improvisation.

In Class Screening: Anchorman

Homework: Read "Alien: Engineers" Script coverage due submitted to D2L before class 3 begins

Homework: Post Screening Thoughts on D2L Discussion Board: "Anchorman"

Class 3

Due: "Alien: Engineers" script coverage submitted to D2L dropbox.

Due: Post screening thoughts on "Anchorman"

Lecture: Genre Writing. Story Structure.

In Class Screening: Prometheus.

Homework: Read "Drive." Script coverage for "Drive" due on D2L by the beginning of Class 4.

Homework: Post Screening Thoughts on D2L Discussion Board: "Prometheus"

Class 4

Due: "Drive" script coverage submitted to D2L dropbox.

Due: Post Screening Thoughts on D2L Discussion Board: "Prometheus"

Lecture: Character.

In Class Screening: Drive.

Homework: Read "Memento Mori". Short story analysis due next class.

Homework: Post Screening Thoughts on D2L Discussion Board: "Drive"

Class 5

Due: Memento Mori short story analysis

Due: Post Screening Thoughts on D2L Discussion Board: "Drive"

Lecture: Action & Tension.

In Class Screening: Memento

Homework: **MIDTERM ESSAY**

Class 6.

Due: **MIDTERM ESSAY**

Due: Post Screening Thoughts on D2L Discussion Board: "WWZ"

Lecture: Adaptation - Book to Script to Screen.

In Class Screening: TBA

Homework: Read "Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption" Script coverage due Class 7.

Homework: Post Screening Thoughts on D2L Discussion Board: "Fantastic Mr. Fox".

Class 7

Due: Read "Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption" Script coverage due Class 7.

Due: Post Screening Thoughts on D2L Discussion Board: "Fantastic Mr. Fox".

Lecture: Theme & Symbolism in Cinema.

In Class Screening: "Shawshank Redemption".

Homework: Post Screening Thoughts on D2L Discussion Board.

Homework: Read "Hated". Script coverage due Class 8.

Class 8

Due: Post Screening Thoughts on D2L Discussion Board.

Due: Read "Hated". Script coverage due Class 9.

Lecture: The Independent Film.

In Class Screening: "Hated".

Homework: Watch, "Thelma & Louise". Write a 3-5 page essay citing key plot points.

Handout will be provided.

Class 9

Due: Post Screening Thoughts on D2L Discussion Board: "Hated".

Lecture: Development.

In Class Screening: Do the Right Thing.

Homework: Read "SEVEN". Script coverage due final class.

Class 10

Due: Post screening thoughts on D2L discussion board: Do the right thing.

Due: Script Coverage: "SE7EN"

In Class Screening: "SE7EN"

Homework: FINAL PROJECT due next Thursday

Final Project Assigned: You've spent the past 5 weeks as a Script Reader for a production company and today you got a major promotion. You're now a movie executive. You have 4 scripts to choose from as your next movie. Choose one and write an analysis using the storytelling conventions we have discussed in class.

The analysis should not be a linear retelling of the script's plot. Use the language we learned in this class. You must discuss the narrative devices employed throughout to build a cohesive and engaging narrative. Write a 5-7 page analysis of the project as to whether or not you would green light this movie and why.

Due next Tuesday.

COURSE POLICIES:

Attendance:

Each week's class consists of a lecture & a screening. Your attendance is mandatory.

For the purposes of this class, an absence is defined as either not showing up for class or showing up 15 minutes after class has begun. All absences will result in a reduction of the attendance/

participation grade.

Assignments:

Reading assignments must be completed by the date to which they are assigned in the syllabus. Reasonable deadlines are given for completion for each assignment. Consequently late assignments will not be accepted. (Late assignment = F)

Exceptions:

A.)Medical emergency. You must contact me within 24 hours of the assignment due date and submit support documents within 48 hours of the assignment due date.

B.)Personal emergency. If you miss an assignment deadline because of any other reason besides a medical one, you must submit compelling evidence supporting your excuse within 24 hours of the assignment due date.

Examinations:

There are no exams given in this course. You will be graded on your written work and class participation.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism on assignments is a serious offense and earns the student a failing grade for the class. There are no exceptions to this rule. If you are in doubt about the definition of plagiarism, consult your student handbook. Course Lectures/Reading Assignments: Lecture presentations will occur weekly. In addition to the screenings, the screenplay readings are an integral part of the course learning. BOTH SOURCES ARE NEEDED.

Content Changes:

Depending on time factors, the assignments projected for the term may require alteration or rescheduling, as well as the lectures.

Please bring either your laptop or something to take notes with for each class.

Assignments should be typed and double-spaced in 12- point font. All assignments are due at the beginning of class.

Sexual Harassment:

The policy as specified in the student handbook will be adhered to in this class.

Incomplete

An incomplete grade is given only for an exceptional reason such as a death in the family, a serious illness, etc. Any such reason must be documented. Any incomplete request must be made at least two weeks before the final, and approved by the Dean of the College of Computing and Digital Media. Any consequences resulting from a poor grade for the course will not be considered as valid reasons for such a request.

Resources for 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 either the PLuS Program (for LD, AD/ HD) or
The Office for Students with
Disabilities (for all other disabilities) at: Student Center, LPC, Suite #370 Phone number:
(773)325.1677 Fax: (773)325.3720 TTY: (773)325.7296