

DC222 Classic Hollywood Story Structure

Spring Quarter 2017
Monday 5:45 – 9:00
Daley LL105

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Office Hours: M 5:00-5:45 and by
appt

COLTube: coltube.cdm.depaul.edu
D2L: d2l.depaul.edu

Course Description

This course provides critical analysis of successful films and their narratives structures. Films of various genres and eras will be examined. Students will learn how to recognize classical three-act structure in the 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.

Domain Description

DC222: Classic Hollywood Story 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 while 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, come to better understand the original audience that witnessed a work of art and how its meaning and significance changes over time. These courses focus on works of art or literature, however the process of analysis may include social, cultural, and historical issues. Genres covered in this domain include literature, the visual arts, media arts, the performing arts, music, and theater.

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
 - Articulate and explain the “content” of that work and/or its methodology of production.
- Comment on the relationship between form and content in a work.
 - How does the 14-line sonnet both enable and inhibit its practitioner, for example?
 - What are the generic expectations of a particular form?
 - How does an artist complicate, enrich, or subvert such expectations?

- Assess the formal aspects of their subject and put those qualities into words, using, when appropriate, specialized vocabulary employed in class and readings.
- Contextualize a work of art.
 - Do so with respect to other works of art in terms of defining its place within a broader style or genre.
 - 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.

Weekly responses to films, a mid-term, and a final will assess and develop student learning across these objectives.

Writing Expectations

A minimum of 5 - 7 pages of writing for courses in the Arts and Literature domain (including studio courses) is required. This is accomplished through weekly film responses and a midterm paper.

College-level writing is expected. Written assignments that do not meet a standard of professional, coherent writing with correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation will be returned ungraded to the student for revisions. Students will have 1 week to improve and resubmit the assignment for a grade. Failure to do so will result in a grade of 0. Assignments that require revision and resubmission will not receive an A.

DePaul offers some useful resources for improving writing. The University Center for Writing-based Learning (UCWbL) can help tremendously.

Loop Campus: 25 E. Jackson Ave, Lewis room 1600. 312-362-6726
 Lincoln Park: 2320 N. Kenmore, SAC room 212. 773-325-4272

Course Management System Assignments will be posted to D2L, films to Coltube.

Textbooks and Printed Resources To be distributed via D2L.

Attendance

Attendance is required for students in the in-person section of this class. More than 1 unexcused absences during the quarter will result in a full letter grade reduction in the final grade. More than 3 unexcused absences will result in a grade of F for the course.

Absences will only be excused if I receive an excused absence notification from the Dean of Students Office. Students may request this document from the Dean of Students Office directly.

Course Policies

Late work will be penalized by 10% per day past the original due date and time. Work later than 7 days will not be accepted and will be marked as 0.

Cell phone and laptop use in class will not be allowed, unless you have a need for the devices documented by the University's Center for Students with Disabilities (see below for their contact info).

Participation is expected and will be factored into your final grade. Your thoughts and opinions on the subjects we discuss and the films we watch are important, valid, and may be helpful to other students.

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, posted under Announcements in D2L and sent via email.

Grading

Attendance: 10% // Participation: 10% // Screening responses: 20% // Midterm Paper: 25% // Final Presentation: 35%

A = 100-93, A- = 92-90, B+ = 89-87, B = 86-83, B- = 82-80, C+ = 79-77, C = 76-73, C- = 72-70, D+ = 69-67, D = 66-63, 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.

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 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.

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

Fax: (312)362-6544

TTY: (773)325.7296

DC222 WQ2017 SCHEDULE

THIS SCHEDULE IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

1. 3/27

INTRODUCTION TO COURSE

DEFINING CLASSICAL HOLLYWOOD FILM STRUCTURE

FILM: TO BE OR NOT TO BE

Reading Assignments:

- How to Watch a Movie, Chapter 2 – David Thomson
- To Be or Not to Be: The Play's the Thing – Geoffrey O'Brien
- Begin reading *Casablanca* screenplay

Written Assignment:

- *To Be or Not to Be* response

2. 4/3

CLASSICAL HOLLYWOOD STYLE

VISUAL LANGUAGE OF CINEMA

FILM: CITIZEN KANE

Reading Assignments:

- How to Watch a Movie, Chapter 4
- Excerpt from *Storytelling in the New Hollywood* – Kristin Thompson ("Modern Classicism")
- Finish reading *Casablanca* screenplay

- Come prepared with list of 5 scenes you think are pivotal to the story of *Casablanca*.

Written Assignment:

- *Citizen Kane* response

3. 4/10

CONFLICT + CHARACTER

FILM: CASABLANCA

Reading Assignment:

- Excerpt from Story – Robert McKee (“Character and Structure”)

Written Assignment:

- *Casablanca* response
- Midterm Paper assigned, due 4/24

4. 4/17

THE 3-ACT PARADIGM

NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES

FILM: ALIEN

Viewing Assignments: Locke

Written Assignments:

- 3-Act Worksheet for *Alien*
- *Locke* response

5. 4/24

MONTAGE

FILM: PSYCHO

Presentations Assigned

Reading Assignments:

- How to Watch a Movie, Chapter 8
- Hybrid Plots in Psycho – Peter Wollen

Written Assignments:

- *Psycho* response

Midterm paper due

6. 5/1

ALTERNATIVES TO THE PARADIGM: STRUCTURE

FILM: PULP FICTION

Reading Assignments:

- Disturbing New Pathways – James Kendrick
- All Stories are the Same – John Yorke

Written Assignments:

- *Pulp Fiction* response

7. 5/8

ALTERNATIVES TO THE PARADIGM: TIME

FILM: RUN LOLA RUN

Final Presentations Assigned

Written Assignments:

- *Run Lola Run* response

8. 5/15

ALTERNATIVES TO THE PARADIGM: CONFLICT

FILM: MOONLIGHT

Written Assignments:

- *Moonlight* response

9. 5/22

ALTERNATIVES TO THE PARADIGM: EVERYTHING

FILM: HOLY MOTORS

Written Assignments:

- *Holy Motors* response

10. 5/29 – MEMORIAL DAY, UNIVERSITY CLOSED

11. 6/5 – FINAL PRESENTATIONS

ASSIGNMENT INFORMATION

1. **Weekly Viewing Responses.** As part of this class, you will watch at least one film each week. Your viewing of these films must be active. You will need to write a response paper for each of the films of a minimum 400 words.
2. **Midterm Paper.** Please see D2L for more information. You will write a 3- to 5-page paper applying what is learned in the first half of the quarter to (almost) any American film made in the past 5 years. The following films are not allowed: *Hateful 8*, *Django Unchained*, *Inglorious Basterds*, *Deadpool*. I'm tired of reading about them, frankly.
3. **Final Presentations.** You will be assigned a film that is structurally or narratively different from the standard American style. I've watched all of the films – they're good. Trust me. You will make a roughly 5-minute presentation to the class that summarizes the film's plot, explores what makes it unique or different from the standard paradigm, and discusses what impact that difference has on audience experience.