

## *DC 222 Classic Hollywood Film Structure*

Winter Quarter 2018 - 2019 | **Wednesday 10:00-1:15** | 14 E. Jackson Room 214

Instructor: Lee Madsen

Office: CDM 434 Office hours: Monday 2:30PM to 5PM

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### **Course Description:**

Critical analysis of successful Hollywood films and their narrative structures. Films of various genres and eras will be examined. 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, climax, and Aristotelian terminology.  
PREREQUISITE(S): NONE

By the end of the term students will:

Critically analyze films focusing on the filmmakers' 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:**

DC 222 Classic Hollywood Film 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 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:**

Students will be able to explain 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 assess the formal aspects of their subject and put those qualities into words, using, when appropriate, specialized vocabulary employed in class and readings.

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:**

One long paper and four shorter assignments will assess and develop student learning across the objectives above. Assignments will be drawn from the films screened in class, course lectures, and the reading material posted online. Students will be expected to watch additional films not screened in class. Four extra credit projects will be made available throughout the quarter. Weekly responses to films, a midterm,

and a final paper 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 is required. This class requires a minimum of 10 pages in response papers.

**Attendance:**

Students are expected to attend each class and to remain for the duration. Coming 15 minutes late or leaving for 15 minutes or more during class constitutes an absence for the student. The overall grade for participation drops one-tenth after any absence. Three absences for any reason, whether excused or not, may constitute failure for the course. For online students, lectures must be viewed in their entirety. Any missed, or partially watched lectures will constitute an “absence”.

**Class Discussion/Participation:**

Student participation in class discussions will be measured in two ways. First, students are highly encouraged to ask questions and offer comments relevant to the day’s topic either in class or online. Secondly, students will contribute to the course discussion boards on D2L. Each student must post one comment per week and reply to two others to receive the full participation grade for class.

**Attitude:** A professional and academic attitude is expected throughout this course. Measurable examples of non-academic or unprofessional attitude include but are not limited to: talking to others when the instructor is speaking, mocking another’s opinion, cell phones ringing, emailing, texting or using the internet whether on a phone or computer. If any issues arise a student may be asked to leave the classroom. The professor will work with the Dean of Students Office to navigate such student issues.

**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 and stowed in your bag. 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.

**Course Management:**

This course is housed and managed on **D2L**. There, you will find each week's recorded lecture (available after 5:30 PM on Wednesdays), the required reading material, most of our assignments, and, as the semester progresses – your current grade. Also posted on D2L will be a weekly discussion forum for questions and thoughts concerning the films, lectures, assignments and the course itself which are part of the course participation grade.

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/>**

**Textbooks and printed resources**

All reading required for this course will be provided via D2L.

**Software/Hardware needed to complete assignments:**

Word processing program for written assignments.

Computer/internet access and D2L for assignment submission, quizzes, discussions etc

## **Grading**

Course assignments: There are 10 assignments that will be posted on D2L. Late work will not be accepted. LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

## **Discussion Question Response Papers**

After each film, a set of discussion questions will be posted under “Submissions” on D2L. Write a minimum one-page (250 words total for ALL questions, and I will check word count) response paper, and upload the **.pdf** to D2L. There will be a total of 10 of these assignments in the course.

## **Secret Word or Phrase**

For online students ONLY, a “secret phrase” will be given at some point of the lecture or discussion on the class prior to the response paper’s due date. Failure to include the secret phrase will result in a grade deduction for the paper. The point of the secret phrase is to ensure that online students watch and listen to the entire lecture and discussion, as if they were in class. If you cannot find the secret phrase, you may be multitasking and should try focusing on only the class recording. Hence, I will not provide the phrase (as I would not give the answer to a midterm question).

## **Final Exam**

One final exam will be administered through D2L. It’ll have a 2 hour time limit, and once you start you cannot stop, so make sure you are prepared before you begin. You need to watch the lectures and films before taking the test so if you aren’t caught up, don’t take the quiz until you are. It will be combination of multiple choice, true/false, matching, fill in the blank, short answer and essay (long answer) questions. D2L auto-grades the quizzes and sometimes will mark you wrong for typos

etc. Do not worry. Every answer will be reviewed for credit. D2L obviously doesn't grade the short answer/long answer portions so your posted grade may look very scary until the quiz is fully graded. Do not fret. That said, the final exam is worth a HUGE chunk of your grade and it will automatically turn off at the time stated in the syllabus. I will not reopen it for you if you forget to take it, so make sure you don't forget.

Discussion & Screening Response Papers: 60 %

Attendance & Participation: 15%

Final Exam: 25%

### **Standards for Achievement:**

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

**Grade A** Student performs in an outstanding way. Student exhibits achievement and craftsmanship in all work. Student exhibits commitment to expanding ideas, vocabulary and performance.

**Grade B** Student performs beyond the requirement of the project. Student exhibits above average progress and craftsmanship. Student exhibits above average interest in expanding idea, vocabulary, and performance.

**Grade C** Criteria of assignment is met, and all requirements are fulfilled. Student shows average quality work and minimum time and effort on projects. Student shows moderate interest.

**Grade D** Student performance is uneven and below average. Requirements for projects are only partially fulfilled. Minimal interest is shown and attendance, participation and involvement are inadequate.

**Grade F** Student fails to meet minimum course requirements and shows no interest. Levels of participation and craftsmanship are extremely poor. Student's attendance is inadequate.

### **Winter Quarter Schedule:**

#### **Character**

Week 1: 1/9

Course introduction, story terms and concepts.

Screen: Fight Club

Assignment 1: Fight Club Response Paper

### **Three Act Structure**

Week 2: 1/16

Due: Fight Club Response Paper

Lecture: Three Act Structure

Screen: Juno

Assignment 2: Juno Response Paper

### **Character Development across three acts.**

Week 3: 1/23

Due: Juno Response Paper

Screen: Frances Ha

Assignment 3: Frances Ha Response Paper

### **The Hero's Journey.**

Week 4: 1/30

Due: Frances Ha Response Paper

Screen: Matrix

Assignment 4: Matrix Response Paper

### **The Hero's Journey Part 2**

Week 5: 2/6

Due: Matrix Response Paper

Screen: Brick

Assignment 5: Brick Response Paper

### **Ensemble**

Week 6: 2/13

Due: Brick Response Paper

Screen: Little Miss Sunshine

## Assignment 6: Little Miss Sunshine Response Paper

### **The Sequence Approach and Save the Cat**

Week 7: 2/20

Due: Little Miss Sunshine Response Paper

Screen: The Big Lebowski

Assignment 7: The Big Lebowski Response Paper

### **Sci Fi & Experimental Narrative**

Week 8: 2/27

Due: The Big Lebowski Response Paper

Screen: Coherence

Assignment 8: Coherence Response Paper

### **Alternative Narrative**

Week 9: 3/6

Due: Coherence Response Paper

Screen: Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind

Assignment 9: Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind Response Paper

### **Alternative Narrative part 2**

Week 10: 3/13

Due: Eternal Sunshine Response Paper

Screen: Donnie Darko

Assignment 10: Donnie Darko Response Paper - **Due Wednesday 3/20**

### **FINAL EXAM**

Week 11: 3/20

There is no class or online lecture. Instead, use class time to complete your final exam online: **DUE BY 10PM ON WED 3/20**

### **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.

### **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: <http://www.cdm.depaul.edu/Current%20Students/Pages/PoliciesandProcedures.aspx>

### **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