

**SCWR 122-401/410: Script to Screen**

Autumn Quarter 2019

Sect. 401: Tu 1:30pm - 4:45pm

Sect. 410: Online

Location: 14 E. Jackson Room 802

**Instructor Information**

Jef Burnham

Pronouns: he/him/his

Email: [jburnha1@depaul.edu](mailto:jburnha1@depaul.edu)\*

Office Hours: M &amp; Th 11:20am-12:50pm (2250 N. Sheffield, Room 332)

Remote Office Hours: W 9am-12pm (via Zoom)

\*If you do not receive a response from me within 24 hours, assume I did not get your email.

**Course Description**

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.

**Prerequisites:** None

**Course Outcomes:** In addition to other short writing assignments, students will complete a final analysis paper, writing at least ten pages.

**Learning Objectives:**

Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to:

- recognize the role of the screenwriter in the creation of a film
- interpret standard screenplay format
- compare the writing styles of individual screenwriters
- relate the process in which a screenplay is developed and ultimately produced
- identify and analyze story alterations between a screenplay and its final film

**Previous Course Number:** DC 224**Required Readings:**

All required readings will be provided on D2L under Content in PDF format and readings must be completed by the date specified in the course schedule below.

### **Learning Domain Description**

This course 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, 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.

### **Grading Scale**

A	93-100 %
A-	90-92 %
B+	87-89 %
B	84-86 %
B-	80-83 %
C+	77-79%
C	74-76 %
C-	70-73 %
D+	67-69 %
D	60-66 %

### **Grade Breakdown**

Response Papers (5 points each)	40 points
Final Paper	30 points
Attendance/Participation	30 points
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 points possible</b>

### **Response Papers**

Between weeks 3 and 10, students will write a weekly response paper exploring the changes made to a film between the week's assigned screenplay and the final filmed version of that script.\* The paper must explore how the changes from script to screen strengthened or weakened the story from an audience's perspective. Papers must place an emphasis on concepts from the corresponding week's lecture material, but may also explore other topics related to character, tension, theme, or whatever piques your interest, so long as the basic prompt is also met. These responses must be 500 words in length and presented in Times New Roman 12 pt. font—approximately one single-spaced typed Word document page. File names should appear in the following format: **LastName\_FirstName\_Assignment**

Response Papers must be submitted to the appropriate D2L Submission Folder in PDF format by the due date/time listed in the Course Schedule below.

\*To coincide with the Adaptation & Remakes lecture, students will watch a film and *then* read an adapted screenplay, writing their responses on the alterations made from the film to adaptation instead.

### **Final Paper**

For this paper, you will choose to write about one of a selection of unproduced feature film scripts provided by the instructor. You will write a 4- to 6-page paper that explores the ways in which your chosen script would fail to satisfy audience expectations for a narrative feature film. This should NOT be a retelling of the story, but instead an essay in which you present an argument about the screenplay and defend it. This argument should be presented objectively (no "I feel" or "I think," which are implied) and must draw on the cinematic storytelling conventions discussed throughout the course.

Papers must be double-spaced, written in Times New Roman 12 pt. font, and have one-inch margins on all sides with file names formatted: **LastName\_FirstName\_Assignment**. Papers must be uploaded to the D2L Submissions Folder **in PDF format by November 26 at 4:45pm.**

### ***Notes on the Evaluation of Student Work:***

Grading rubrics according to which written assignments are assessed will be available on D2L under Content. In order to obtain the desired grade on any assignment, students must review and adhere to these guidelines. In general, written work will be evaluated according to the clarity of your writing, adherence to assignment guidelines, and basic mechanics (i.e. spelling, grammar, and punctuation). Please allow up to 7-10 days for the return of graded materials.

## **Course Policies**

### **Class Format**

Each meeting will consist of a discussion of the previous week's film and a lecture to contextualize topics related to the current week's screenplay and film for use in your Reflection Papers. Following that, a film will be screened weekly. Attendance at screenings is mandatory for the 122-401 in-class section (even if you have already seen the film) and failure to remain in class for screenings will affect your grade as detailed in the Attendance/Participation section below. *No technology is allowed during the screenings.* Notes on films should be taken on paper.

**[DISCLAIMER: Films screened WILL include graphic language, violence, & sex.]**

### **Students in the 122-410 online section:**

You are required to view the discussion/lecture portions of the class, which will be available to you on D2L each Tuesday evening. You are also required to view the films watched in class. Films will be made available to you (1) via [COLTube](#), (2) via a link to the film as legally found elsewhere online, or (3) it will otherwise be available on Netflix.

### **Attendance/Participation [122-401 (in-class)]:**

Each week's class consists of a combination of lectures, screenings, and class discussions and/or group exercises. Attendance is mandatory and participation in all discussions and exercises is expected. I assess both the quality and quantity of participation in class to elevate collective learning. Students who are absent obviously cannot participate in class.

I define an absence as not attending class, sleeping in class, or showing up 15 minutes late or more for a class. All absences will result in a deduction of 3 points from your overall Attendance/Participation grade; **if you are absent more than two times, you fail the course.** If you are absent, you may make up up to 2 points for participation by participating in the online discussion for the week in question, but note that this does not excuse your absence.

(Note: Excused absences may be obtained *from the Dean of Students Offices* under certain circumstances and given the proper documentation.)

### **Attendance [122-410 (online)]:**

Online students are required to view the recordings of the on-campus discussions/lectures that take place each Monday. To ensure online students view the lectures, I will, throughout each session, provide online students with 1-3 *Lecture Keywords* that you must take note of.

In order to prove that you have viewed the lecture, you will then enter these keywords into the appropriate Lecture Keyword Submission quiz (found on D2L under More>Quizzes) **by 11:59pm CT on the Sunday concluding the week the lecture was recorded.** Failure to submit lecture keywords by the assigned time for any lecture each week will result in a loss of 1 point from your overall Attendance/Participation grade in the course.

**Participation [122-410 (online)]:**

Online students are required to participate in weekly discussions on the D2L Discussion Board forums. Substantial participation in these discussions is required prior to **11:59pm each Monday** beginning Week 2. Discussion topics will relate to assigned screenplay readings, assigned screenings, or any other topic the instructor deems worthy of conversation in these forums. Individual topics will be dictated in each week's discussion prompt. Failure to participate in the Discussions in a given week will result in a deduction of 2 points from your overall Attendance/Participation grade in the course.

**Late Work:**

Assignments must be completed and uploaded to D2L in PDF format by the date and time specified in the Class Schedule. **Any Response Paper submitted late will receive a 1.5 point grade deduction for each day it is late. Final Papers, however, must be turned in by the assigned due date/time or receive a grade of zero.** Printed submissions or submissions by email will not be accepted. I also suggest backing up your work online as computers crash.

**Technology Statement:**

Laptops/tablets may be used during lectures/discussions **ONLY** to take notes.\* Also, texting, etc. on your cell phone is not allowed, as it is distracting to your fellow students as well as the instructor. You are asked to keep yours on vibrate and may excuse yourself to the hallway if there is an emergency call you must take. If you are expecting such a call, please let the instructor know in advance.

**No technology use of any kind will be allowed during film or clip screenings.** Use of technology during screenings may result in you being asked to leave and being marked as absent.

*\*If I receive complaints about the distracting nature of your technology use or if you are not paying attention, I will no longer allow your continued use of technology in class.*

**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. For additional information, please see

<https://resources.depaul.edu/teaching-commons/teaching/Pages/online-teaching-evaluations.aspx>

### **Academic Integrity and Plagiarism**

This course will be subject to the university's academic integrity policy. More information can be found at <https://resources.depaul.edu/teaching-commons/teaching/academic-integrity/Pages/default.aspx>.

**If the instructor finds a student has violated the Academic Integrity Policy/plagiarized their work, the student will fail the course, receiving an automatic F grade.** (Note: Turnitin is used to check the originality of submissions on D2L.) Actions taken by the instructor in this regard do not preclude the university from taking further action, including dismissal from the university.

### **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>

### **Incomplete Grades**

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. All incomplete requests must be approved by the instructor of the course and a CDM Associate Dean. Only exceptions cases will receive such approval. Information about the Incomplete Grades policy can be found at <http://www.cdm.depaul.edu/Current%20Students/Pages/Grading-Policies.aspx>

### **Preferred Name & Gender Pronouns**

Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the quarter so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. Please also note that students may choose to identify within the University community with a preferred first name that differs from their legal name and may also update their gender. The preferred first name will appear in University related systems and documents except where the use of the legal name is necessitated or required by University business or legal need. For more information and instructions on how to do so, please see the Student Preferred Name and Gender Policy at [policies.depaul.edu/policy/policy.aspx?pid=332](http://policies.depaul.edu/policy/policy.aspx?pid=332)

**Students with Disabilities:**

Students seeking disability-related accommodations are required to register with DePaul's Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) enabling them to access accommodations and support services to assist with their success. There are two office locations:

- Loop Campus – Lewis Center #1420 – (312) 362-8002
- Lincoln Park Campus – Student Center #370 – (773) 325-1677

Students who register with the Center for Students with Disabilities are also invited to contact Dr. Gregory Moorhead, Director of the Center, privately to discuss how he may assist in facilitating the accommodations to be used in a course. This is best done early in the term. The conversation will remain confidential to the extent possible.

Please see <https://offices.depaul.edu/student-affairs/about/departments/Pages/csd.aspx> for Services and Contact Information.

### **Course Schedule**

**Week 1 (9/17)**

In Class: Review Syllabus/Film Schedule  
 Lecture: What is a Screenplay?  
 Assign: **Response Papers**

**Week 2 (9/24)**

Reading Due: Screenplay 1

In Class: Discuss Screenplay 1  
 Lecture: Feature Film Development  
 Screen Film 1

**Week 3 (10/1)**

Reading Due: Screenplay 2

In Class: Discuss Film 1  
 Lecture: Cinematic Storytelling Conventions  
 Screen Film 2

**ASSIGNMENT DUE: Response Paper 1** (Due by Noon to D2L on 10/1)

**Week 4 (10/8)**

Reading Due: Screenplay 3

In Class: Discuss Film 2

Lecture: Character

Screen Film 3

**ASSIGNMENT DUE: Response Paper 2** (Due by Noon to D2L on 10/8)

**Week 5 (10/15)**

Readings Due: Screenplay 4

In Class: Discuss Film 3

Lecture: Theme

Screen Film 4

**ASSIGNMENT DUE: Response Paper 3** (Due by Noon to D2L on 10/15)

**Week 6 (10/22)**

Readings Due: Screenplay 5

In Class: Discuss Film 4

Lecture: Tension & Suspense

Screen Film 5

**ASSIGNMENT DUE: Response Paper 4** (Due by Noon to D2L on 10/22)

**Week 7 (10/29)**

Reading Due: Screenplay 6

In Class: Discuss Film 5

Lecture: Genre

Screen Film 6

**ASSIGNMENT DUE: Response Paper 5** (Due by Noon to D2L on 10/29)

**Week 8 (11/5)**

Reading Due: Screenplay 7

In Class: Discuss Film 6

Lecture: Alternative Approaches in Cinema

Screen Film 7

**ASSIGNMENT DUE: Response Paper 6** (Due by Noon to D2L on 11/5)

**Week 9 (11/12)**

Reading Due: Read Screenplay 8 *AFTER* screening Film 8

In Class: Discuss Film 7

Lecture: Adaptation & Remakes

Assign: **Final Paper** (Due by 11/26 at 4:45pm)

Screen Film 8

**ASSIGNMENT DUE: Response Paper 7** (Due by Noon to D2L on 11/12)

**Week 10 (11/19)**

In Class: Discuss Film 8

Lecture: Stories from Development Hell

Screen/Discuss Film TBA

**ASSIGNMENT DUE: Response Paper 8** (Due by Noon to D2L on 11/19)

**FINAL PAPER DUE: Upload to D2L by Tuesday, November 26 at 4:45pm**