

## SCWR 120-502/511: Film Structure for Majors

Winter Quarter 2020

Section 502: We 1:30pm - 4:45pm

Section 511: Online

Location: 14 E. Jackson Room LL105

### **Instructor Information**

Jef Burnham

Pronouns: he/him/his

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

Office Hours: Tuesdays & Wednesdays, 10am-11:30am

Office: Daley Building (14 E. Jackson), Room 200B

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

### **Course Description**

A critical analysis of three-act film structure as well as an introduction to alternative narrative structures including, but not limited to, dual protagonist, ensemble, and non-linear structures. Films of various genres and eras will be examined. Students will develop a cinematic language with which to discuss films as well as a toolbox of techniques to use when making films.

### **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:

- identify the relationship between character development and story structure
- apply the Three Act Structure, Hero's Journey, and Sequence Approach paradigms
- analyze the manner in which story structure is influenced by genre
- discuss nontraditional narratives as a counterpoint to "classic" structure
- employ a vocabulary of cinematic terms

### **Previous Course Number:** DC 221

### **Required Readings:**

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

### **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
<u>Attendance/Participation</u>	<u>30 points</u>
TOTAL	100 points possible

### **Response Papers**

Students will write a weekly response paper beginning Week 3 exploring each corresponding screenplay and film as outlined in the Response Paper Assignment Sheet on D2L. The paper must analyze both the screenplay and film, evidencing engagement with both texts. Your analysis **MUST** relate to the 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.

### **Final Paper**

For this paper, you will write a 4- to 6-page paper about Screenplay/Film 9 that presents an argument of your own devising about the screenplay and film's narratives. This should **NOT** be a retelling of the script/film's story, but instead an essay in which you present an argument about the two texts and defend that argument. In constructing your argument, you must draw extensively on concepts related to cinematic storytelling conventions presented in lectures/discussions throughout the course. This argument should be presented objectively (no "I feel" or "I think").

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 March 18 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, time-permitting, a film will be screened weekly; if, however, time does not permit, students will be expected to view the screen outside of class. Attendance at in-class screenings is mandatory for 120-501 students (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 policy. *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 120-511 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 via [COLTube](#) or via an embedded video on D2L.

### **Attendance/Participation [120-502 (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, showing up 15 minutes late or more for a class, or leaving class prior to the session's completion. 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 you missed, 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 [120-511 (online)]:**

Online students are required to view the recordings of the on-campus discussions/lectures that take place each Wednesday. 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 MONDAY following each lecture's recording.** 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 [120-511 (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 TUESDAY** 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 and the prompt must be adhered to in order to earn full points. Failure to participate in any given week's Discussion will result in a deduction of 2 points from your overall Attendance/Participation grade.

### **Late Work:**

Assignments must be completed and uploaded to D2L in PDF format by the date and time specified in the Course 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 an automatic grade of zero.** Printed submissions or submissions by email are not 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 or to have the week's reading open.\* The instructor may ask you to put your computer away at any time if you are being distracting; failure to do so will result in a loss of participation points for the day. Texting, etc. on cell phones is not allowed, as it is distracting to your peers and the instructor. Keep your phone on silent or vibrate, and 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 is allowed during film or clip screenings.** Use of technology during screenings may result in you losing participation points and/or being asked to leave and being marked as absent for the day.

*\*If I receive complaints about the distracting nature of your technology use from your peers or if you are not paying attention, your continued use of technology in class will not be allowed.*

### **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 (1/8)**

In Class: Review Syllabus/Film Schedule  
 Lecture: Screenplay Basics  
 Assign: **Response Papers**

### **Week 2 (1/15)**

Reading Due: Screenplay 1

In Class: Discuss Screenplay 1  
 Lecture: Character and Conflict  
 Screen Film 1

**Week 3 (1/22)**

Reading Due: Screenplay 2

In Class: Discuss Film 1

Lecture: Monomythic Structures

Screen Film 2

**ASSIGNMENT DUE: Response Paper 1** (Due by Noon to D2L on 1/22)

**Week 4 (1/29)**

Reading Due: Screenplay 3

In Class: Discuss Film 2

Lecture: Conventional Three-Act Structure

Screen Film 3

**ASSIGNMENT DUE: Response Paper 2** (Due by Noon to D2L on 1/29)

**Week 5 (2/5)**

Readings Due: Screenplay 4

In Class: Discuss Film 3

Lecture: Sequences / “Save the Cat”

Screen Film 4

**ASSIGNMENT DUE: Response Paper 3** (Due by Noon to D2L on 2/5)

**Week 6 (2/12)**

Readings Due: Screenplay 5

In Class: Discuss Film 4

Lecture: Genre Narratives (Horror)

Screen Film 5

**ASSIGNMENT DUE: Response Paper 4** (Due by Noon to D2L on 2/12)

**Week 7 (2/19)**

Reading Due: Screenplay 6

In Class: Discuss Film 5

Lecture: Genre Narratives (Romance)

Screen Film 6

**ASSIGNMENT DUE: Response Paper 5** (Due by Noon to D2L on 2/19)

**Week 8 (2/26)**

Reading Due: Screenplay 7

In Class: Discuss Film 6

Lecture: Adaptations & Remakes

Screen Film 7

**ASSIGNMENT DUE: Response Paper 6** (Due by Noon to D2L on 2/26)

**Week 9 (3/4)**

Reading Due: Screenplay 8

In Class: Discuss Film 7

Lecture: Alternative Approaches (Multiple Protagonists/Alt. Unities)

Assign: **Final Paper** (Due by 3/18 at 4:45pm)

Screen Film 8

**ASSIGNMENT DUE: Response Paper 7** (Due by Noon to D2L on 3/4)

**Week 10 (3/11)**

Reading Due: Screenplay 9

In Class: Discuss Film 8

Lecture: Alternative Approaches (Nonlinear/Oneiric Narratives)

Screen/Discuss Film 9

**ASSIGNMENT DUE: Response Paper 8** (Due by Noon to D2L on 3/11)

**FINAL PAPER DUE: Upload to D2L by Wednesday, March 18 at 4:45pm**