

SCWR 121 Classic Hollywood Film Structure - Winter 2020

When: Wednesday 10AM-1:15PM

Where: 14 E. Jackson Room 214

Instructor: Lee Madsen - Email: lmadsen3@cdm.depaul.edu (best way to reach me)

Office: CDM 434 Office hours: Th 10:30AM - 1:30PM

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.

Prerequisites: None

Course Outcomes: In addition to other short writing assignments, students will complete a final analysis paper of 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

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.**

Screening Response Assignments: 50 %

Attendance & Participation: 10%

Final Analysis Paper: 40%

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. A indicates excellence, B indicates good work, C indicates satisfactory work, D work is unsatisfactory in some respect, F is substantially unsatisfactory work.

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".

Screening Response Assignments (60% of final grade)

The instructor will post a topic for you to write about in regards to the lecture, the film that was screened, and the corresponding screenplay/reading assignment after each class. Your response must be a minimum of 500 words, which is essentially two double spaced typed Word document pages. The document must then be saved as a PDF and submitted to the corresponding D2L Dropbox link by the assigned due date. There is a total of ten Screening Response assignments for the quarter, each work five points.

Final Analysis Paper (40% of final grade)

Write an analysis using the storytelling conventions we have discussed throughout the quarter on one screenplay of your choosing (script list provided below). The analysis should NOT be a linear retelling of the script's plot. You must discuss the narrative devices employed throughout to build a cohesive and engaging narrative or, depending on your argument, why the current draft of the script will fail to connect with mainstream audiences. You MUST have a definitive opinion on the material and defend it with specific examples from the script that illustrate the conventions we have discussed this quarter – Don't waiver.

The paper is due via the corresponding D2L Dropbox assignment link on Friday, March 22nd by 11:59pm. No late assignments will be accepted. A few things to keep in mind:

- Remember, your opinion is not wrong as long as you can support it with specific examples from the film.
- In an effort to present your work objectively, please do not use any personal pronouns when referring to your opinion, such as "I feel this film exhibits poor structure" – It is clear you are saying it because the entire paper is your opinion.
- The paper must be no less than four pages - MLA Formatting Required <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/1/>

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).

Winter Quarter 2020 Schedule:

Class 1 - 1/8

Lecture: Course introduction, story terms and concepts.

Screen: *MAD MAX: FURY ROAD*

Assignment 1: Screening Response *MAD MAX: FURY ROAD*

Class 2 - 1/15

Lecture: Character and Conflict

Due: Screening Response *MAD MAX: FURY ROAD*

Screen: *DRIVE*

Assignment 2: *DRIVE* Screening Response, *DRIVE* Screenplay

Class 3 - 1/22

Lecture: Poetics, A Hero with a Thousand Faces

Due: *DRIVE* Screening Response, *DRIVE* Screenplay

Screen: *BLADE RUNNER*

Assignment 3: Screening Response *BLADE RUNNER*, *BLADE RUNNER* Screenplay

Class 4 - 1/29

Lecture: The Sequence Approach

Due: Screening Response *BLADE RUNNER*, *BLADE RUNNER* Screenplay

Screen: GROUNDHOG DAY

Assignment 4: *GROUNDHOG DAY* Screening Response, *GROUNDHOG DAY* Screenplay

Class 5 - 2/5

Lecture: Paradigm of Dramatic Structure

Due: *GROUNDHOG DAY* Screening Response, *GROUNDHOG DAY* Screenplay

Screen: SICARIO

Assignment 5: *SICARIO* Screening Response, *SICARIO* Screenplay

Class 6 - 2/12

Lecture: Adaptations

Due: *SICARIO* Screening Response, *SICARIO* Screenplay

Screen: FANTASTIC MR. FOX

Assignment 6: *FANTASTIC MR. FOX* Screening Response, *FANTASTIC MR. FOX* Novel

Class 7 - 2/19

Lecture: The Hero's Journey

Due: *FANTASTIC MR. FOX* Screening Response, *FANTASTIC MR. FOX* Novel

Screen: BLUE VALENTINE

Assignment 7: *BLUE VALENTINE* Screening Response, *BLUE VALENTINE* Screenplay

Class 8 - 2/26

Lecture: Unity, Order of Events

Due: *BLUE VALENTINE* Screening Response, *BLUE VALENTINE* Screenplay

Screen: JUNO

Assignment 8: *JUNO* Screening Response, *JUNO* Screenplay

Class 9 - 3/4

Lecture: Save the Cat

Due: *JUNO* Screening Response, *JUNO* Screenplay

Screen: THELMA & LOUISE

Assignment 9: *THELMA & LOUISE* Screening Response, *THELMA & LOUISE* Screenplay

Class 10 - 3/11

Lecture: Genre Narratives

Due: *THELMA & LOUISE* Screening Response, *THELMA & LOUISE* Screenplay

Screening: GET OUT

Assignment 10: *GET OUT* Screening Response, *GET OUT* Screenplay

Class 11 -3/18

Due: *GET OUT* response paper, *GET OUT* Screenplay

FINAL PAPER due on 3/20 11:59PM

No class or online lecture.

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.

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

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. Lewis Center 1420, 25 East Jackson Blvd.

Phone number: (312)362-8002 Fax: (312)362-6544

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