

## **SCWR 121-601 & 610: Classic Hollywood Film Structure**

Spring Quarter 2022

Sect. 601: Tuesdays, 1:30PM – 4:45PM

Location: CDM Center, Room 708

Sect. 610: Online (Asynchronous)

### **Instructor Information**

Jef Burnham

Pronouns: he/him

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

Remote Office Hours: Wednesday 8:45AM-1:15PM  
(schedule a Zoom meeting through BlueStar)

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

### **Course Description**

Critical analysis of successful Hollywood films and their narrative structures. Films of multiple genres and eras by creators with a diverse and intersectional range of identities 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.

### **Arts & Literature Domain Learning Outcomes**

1. Students will be able to explain, in well-written prose, what a work of art is about and how it was produced (i.e. they should be able to articulate and explain the “content” of that work and its methodology of production).
2. Students will be able to 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?
3. 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.
4. 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.

**Writing Expectations:** A minimum of 5-7 pages of writing for courses in the Arts and Literature domain (including studio courses) is required.

### **Course 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

### **Textbook & Other Required Readings**

- *Tools of Screenwriting* by David Howard and Edward Mabley [ISBN-10: 0312119089]
- All additional reading materials will be provided in PDF format

**Previous Course Number:** DC 301

### **Course Management**

This course is housed and managed on D2L. All additional reading content, lecture slides, attendance records, grades, discussion boards, and submissions will be found there, as well as the assignment calendar and updates.

### **Grade Breakdown**

Response Paper 1	10 points
Response Paper 2	15 points
Response Paper 3	15 points
Final Paper	30 points
<u>Attendance/Participation</u>	<u>30 points</u>
	100 Totals

### **Grading Scale**

A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	60-66
F	0-59

## Assignments

### **Response Papers**

Throughout the quarter, students will submit three analytical essays covering films screened in-class and their relationship to course concepts related to narrative film structure. In these papers, students must evidence that they have viewed and thought about the required films and considered the connection between the assigned films and course readings and concepts. Find further details on individual reflections in the assignment sheet on D2L.

These responses must be 2-3 pages in length and presented in Times New Roman 12 pt. font. Your file names should appear in the following format:  
LastName\_FirstName\_Assignment

### **Final Paper**

For this 4-6 page paper, you will write about 2 of the 3 final films screened in the class. Construct an argument about these films, comparing/contrasting them and making liberal use of course concepts in your analysis. This should NOT be a retelling of the narratives, but instead an essay focusing on defending the argument you establish in the paper's introduction. This argument should be presented objectively (no "I feel" or "I think," which are implied) and must draw on the course concepts and readings. Find further details in the assignment sheet on D2L.

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 the date and time listed in the Course Schedule.

### **Attendance/Participation [121-601 (in-class)]**

Attendance in our on-campus sessions 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.

For the purposes of this class, an absence is defined as not attending class, sleeping in class, leaving prior to or during the screening, or showing up 15 minutes late or more for a class. All absences will result in a 3-point deduction 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 section's discussion board DURING the week you miss—your absence will not be excused.

[NOTE: Excused absences may be obtained *from the Dean of Students Offices* under certain circumstances and given the proper documentation.]

**Attendance [121-610 (online)]**

Online students are required to view the recordings of the on-campus discussions/lectures that take place each Tuesday. 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 Saturday 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 deduction of 1 point from your overall Attendance/Participation grade in the course.

**Participation [121-610 (online)]:**

Online students are also required to participate in weekly discussions on the D2L Discussion Board forums. Substantial participation in these discussions is required prior to **11:59pm each Sunday**. Discussion topics will relate to assigned 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 loss of 2 points from your overall Attendance/Participation grade in the course.

**Notes on the Evaluation of Student Work**

Rubrics according to which written assignments are assessed will be available on D2L under Content & Submissions. In order to obtain a desired grade on any assignment, students must review and adhere to these guidelines, which include not only the aforementioned expectations, but also mechanics (i.e. spelling, grammar, and punctuation). Please allow up to 7-10 days for the return of graded materials.

**COURSE POLICIES****Late Work Policy**

Late work will not be accepted for full points without a valid excuse, and out of fairness to all, it cannot be workshopped in class. Keep in mind that your groupmates need time to read each of your submissions, so treat all deadlines as hard deadlines. Any work that is submitted late without a valid excuse will receive a 50%-point deduction if submitted in the 24 hours following the deadline; after that the submission will receive a grade of zero, although students will still receive feedback from the instructor to facilitate the cumulative development of these assignments.

**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 students will be notified via email.

### **Academic Support Resources**

<https://resources.depaul.edu/coronavirus/faqs/Pages/classes-academics-students.aspx>

### **Academic Integrity and Plagiarism**

This course will be subject to the academic integrity policy passed by faculty. More information can be found at <http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/>. The university and school policy on plagiarism can be summarized as follows: Students in this course should be aware of the strong sanctions that can be imposed against someone guilty of plagiarism. **If proven, a charge of plagiarism could result in an automatic F in the course** and possible expulsion. (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. The strongest of sanctions will be imposed on anyone who submits as his/her own work any assignment which has been prepared by someone else. If you have any questions or doubts about what plagiarism entails or how to properly acknowledge source materials be sure to consult the instructor.

### **Withdrawal**

Students who withdraw from the course do so by using the Campus Connection system (<http://campusconnect.depaul.edu>). Withdrawals processed via this system are effective the day on which they are made. Simply ceasing to attend, or notifying the instructor, or nonpayment of tuition, does not constitute an official withdrawal from class and will result in academic as well as financial penalty.

### **Retroactive Withdrawal**

This policy exists to assist students for whom extenuating circumstances prevented them from meeting the withdrawal deadline. During their college career students may be allowed one medical/personal administrative withdrawal and one college office administrative withdrawal, each for one or more courses in a single term. Repeated requests will not be considered. Submitting an appeal for retroactive

withdrawal does not guarantee approval. College office appeals for CDM students must be submitted online via MyCDM.

### **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 [cdm.depaul.edu/Current%20Students/Pages/Grading-Policies.aspx](http://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)

### **Online Course Evaluations**

Instructor and course evaluations provide valuable feedback that can improve teaching and learning. The greater the level of participation, the more useful the results. As students, you are in the unique position to view the instructor over time. Your comments about what works and what doesn't, can help faculty build on the elements of the course that are strong and improve those that are weak. Isolated comments from students and instructors' peers may also be helpful, but evaluation results based on high response rates may be statistically reliable (believable). As you experience this course and material, think about how your learning is impacted. Your honest opinions about your experience in and commitment to the course and your learning may help improve some components of the course for the next group of students. Positive comments also show the department chairs and college deans the commitment of instructors to the university and teaching evaluation results are one component used in annual performance reviews (including salary raises and promotion/tenure). The evaluation of the instructor and course provides you an opportunity to make your voice heard on an important issue – the quality of teaching at DePaul. Don't miss this opportunity to provide feedback!

### 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:

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

### COURSE SCHEDULE

#### **Week 1 (3/29)**

Readings Due: *The Tools of Screenwriting*, pgs. 3-27

In Class: Review Syllabus

Lecture: Intro to Film Structure

Assign: **Response Paper 1** (Due by Noon on 4/12)

SCREEN: *Casablanca* (Michael Curtiz, 1942)

#### **Week 2 (4/5)**

Readings Due: *The Tools of Screenwriting*, pgs. 28-39

In Class: Discuss *Casablanca*

Lecture: Character and Conflict

SCREEN: *12 Angry Men* (Sidney Lumet, 1957)

#### **Week 3 (4/12)**

Readings Due: Vogler, *The Writer's Journey* [on D2L]

In Class: Discuss *12 Angry Men*

Lecture: Monomythic Narrative Structures

SCREEN: *The Last Dragon* (Michael Schultz, 1985)

**ASSIGNMENT DUE: Response Paper 1** (Due by Noon to D2L on 4/12)

### Week 4 (4/19)

Readings Due: *The Tools of Screenwriting*, pgs. 43-54

In Class: Discuss *The Last Dragon*

Lecture: Classical Three-Act Structure

Assign: **Response Paper 2** (Due by Noon on 5/3)

SCREEN: *The Invitation* (Karyn Kusama, 2015)

### Week 5 (4/26)

Readings Due: 1) Gulino, "Introduction to Sequences" [on D2L]

2) Snyder, *Save the Cat* [on D2L]

In Class: Discuss *The Invitation*

Lecture: The Sequence Approach and "Save the Cat"

SCREEN: *The Craft* (Andrew Fleming, 1996)

### Week 6 (5/3)

Readings Due: *The Tools of Screenwriting*, pgs. 72-94

In Class: Discuss *The Craft*

Lecture: Tension & Suspense

SCREEN: *Rear Window* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1954)

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

### Week 7 (5/10)

In Class: Discuss *Rear Window*

Lecture: Alternative Approaches

Assign: **Response Paper 3** (Due by Noon on 5/24)

SCREEN: *Fast Times at Ridgemont High* (Amy Heckerling, 1982)

### CLASS 8 (5/17)

In Class: Discuss *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*

Lecture: Genre Approaches (Horror)

SCREEN: *Get Out* (Jordan Peele, 2017)

### Week 9 (5/24)

In Class: Discuss *Get Out*

Lecture: Genre Approaches (Romance)

Assign: **Final Paper** (Due by 4:45pm on 6/7)

SCREEN: *You've Got Mail* (Nora Ephron, 1998)

**ASSIGNMENT DUE: Response Paper 3** (Due by Noon to D2L on 5/24)

### Week 10 (5/31)

In Class: Discuss *You've Got Mail*

Lecture: Contemporary & Future Hollywood Film Structure

**FINAL PAPER DUE**

**Tuesday, June 7 submitted to D2L in PDF format by 4:45pm**