

## CLASSIC HOLLYWOOD FILM STRUCTURE – SPRING 2013

DC222, Sections 602, 611

Thursdays, 1:30pm to 4:45pm

14 East Jackson, LL105 (CDM Theater)

Instructor: Nathan DeWitt, MFA

Office Hours: Monday-Thursday: 10:00am to 1:00pm. (I am in and out of my office frequently during office hours so please let me know if you plan to stop by).

Office: CDM 616

Email: [ndewitt@cdm.depaul.edu](mailto:ndewitt@cdm.depaul.edu)

Prerequisites: None.

Online Course Management System: ColWeb

### **Course Description:**

The purpose of this class is to enable you to study feature films from the professional's point of view and to familiarize you with both the problems screenwriters face in the development of a script and the tools they have at their disposal to solve these problems. In short, this course will familiarize you with the common language professionals use to communicate their ideas in the development and production of feature films- the language of cinematic storytelling. The course included in-depth analyses of several successful, well-made feature films. Students will also have weekly writing assignments related to either the films viewed in class or films students will watch on their own through the online COL Player.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

Students will learn to analyze films focusing on the filmmaker's strategy for:

- Creating an effective, engaging narrative
- Introducing his or her principal character and connecting the audience with this character
- Creating and maintaining tension
- Manipulating the audience's emotional and intellectual response.

### **Readings:**

There are no required readings for this course. However, concepts from the following texts will be covered at length. As such, they make wonderful companions for further investigation.

The Tools of Screenwriting by David Howard & Howard Mabley

The Hero With a Thousand Faces by Joseph Campbell

Screenplay by Syd Field

Save the Cat by Blake Snyder

### **Assignments:**

All assignments for this course must be typed, except the in-class quiz. Assignments must be turned in or uploaded to ColWeb (preferred) by the start of class at 1:30pm on Thursdays.

Because we will be going over the assignments first thing in class, **NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

### **Grading:**

Homework/ Weekly Writing Assignments (30%) (5 assignments worth 6% each).

Terms Quiz / Midterm (25%)

NETWORK Questions (10%)

Final Paper (35%)

### **SCHOOL POLICIES:**

#### **Online Instructor Evaluation**

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 two weeks. Students do not receive reminders once they complete the evaluation. Students complete the evaluation online at <https://mycti.cti.depaul.edu/mycti>

#### **Email**

Email is the primary means of communication between faculty and students enrolled in this course outside of class time. Students should be sure their email listed under "demographic information" at [CampusConnect](#) is correct.

#### **Academic Integrity Policy**

This course will be subject to the academic integrity policy passed by faculty. More information can be found at <http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/>

#### **Plagiarism**

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. 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.

#### **Incomplete**

An incomplete grade is given only for an exceptional reason such as a death in the family, a serious illness, etc. Any such reason must be documented. Any incomplete request must be made at least two weeks before the final, and approved by the Dean of the College of Computing and

Digital Media. Any consequences resulting from a poor grade for the course will not be considered as valid reasons for such a request.

### **Resources for 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 either the PLS Program (for LD, AD/HD) or The Office for Students with Disabilities (for all other disabilities) at:

Student Center, LPC, Suite #370 Phone number: (773)325.1677 Fax: (773)325.3720 TTY: (773)325.7296

### **Class Schedule:**

#### **Week 1: April 4**

**In class:** Structure Lecture and Discussion

**In-class viewing:** BACK TO THE FUTURE

**Homework #1:** BACK TO THE FUTURE Structure Questions

#### **Week 2: April 11**

**In class:** Character Lecture and Discussion

**In-class viewing:** BACK TO THE FUTURE with analysis.

**Homework #2:** Watch WONDER BOYS and answer Character Questions

#### **Week 3: April 18**

**In class:** Discuss WONDER BOYS, Filmmaker's Toolbox Lecture, Tension Lecture

**In-class viewing:** INDIANA JONES AND THE RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK with analysis

**Homework:** Watch THE GAME if you have never seen it.

#### **Week 4: April 25**

**In class:** Filmmaker's Toolbox Lecture #2

**In-class viewing:** THE GAME with analysis.

**Homework:** Study for Quiz.

#### **Week 5: May 2**

**In class:** Terms and Concepts Quiz (Part 1 of Midterm)

**In-class viewing:** Midterm Film (TBA)

**Homework:** Take home questions regarding Midterm Film (Part 2 of Midterm)

#### **Week 6: May 9**

**In class:** Discuss Midterm Film, Save the Cat Lecture

**In-class viewing:** DIE HARD with analysis

**Homework #3:** Watch MEAN GIRLS and prepare a Blake Snyder Beat Sheet for the film

**Week 7: May 16**

**In class:** Discuss MEAN GIRLS

**In-class viewing:** PULP FICTION with analysis

**Homework #4:** Watch BOOGIE NIGHTS and prepare either a Blake Snyder Beat Sheet or a Conventional Structure Map of the film. (Either is right, it's up to you which you choose).

**Week 8: May 23**

**In class:** Discussion of BOOGIE NIGHTS, The Hero's Journey Lecture

**In-class viewing:** BATMAN BEGINS with analysis

**Homework #5:** Watch THE MATRIX and break it down using Joseph Campbell's theory of The Hero's Journey.

**Week 9: May 30**

**In class:** Discussion of THE MATRIX, Alternative Structures Lecture

**In-class viewing:** NETWORK

**Homework #6:** Take home Quiz on NETWORK.

**Week 10: June 6**

**In class:** Discussion of NETWORK and subplots

**In-class viewing:** INTERNAL SUNSHINE OF THE SPOTLESS MIND with analysis

**Homework:** Final Paper

**Final Paper:** You will be provided a handout. You may watch and analyze any film of your choosing, provided we did not analyze it this Quarter.

**Due: June 13, 2013 at 4:45pm.**