

## **DC 224 Script to Screen - Autumn Quarter**

Tuesday 1:30PM - 4:15PM

CDM Building Room 708

Instructor: Lee Madsen

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Office: CDM Building Rm 434 - Monday's 1PM - 5:30PM

DC 224: Script to Screen

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.

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 of 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

Required Textbooks: Instructor selected screenplays in PDF format.

D2L: You will be using D2L extensively in this course.

Required Reading: PDFs of assigned screenplays will be posted on D2L.

Homework: DO NOT EMAIL YOUR ASSIGNMENTS TO ME. Unless otherwise instructed. All assignments are due to be submitted on D2L. Assignments should be typed, double-spaced, 12 point font, PDF's.

For online students ONLY, a "secret phrase" will be given at some point of the lecture or discussion on the class prior to the script coverages 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).

Grading

Script Coverage 60% / Post Screening Discussion/Participation 20% / Final Reading 20%

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.

## **Schedule - Spring 2018**

Class 1 - Tuesday, Sept. 11

Lecture: Class overview. Screenwriting basics. Script Coverage.

In Class Screening: Tangerine

**Homework:** Read "Anchorman" and write Script Coverage for "Anchorman" due on D2L before Class 2 begins. Copy of the script is on D2L (all of the scripts we read will be posted on D2L).

**Homework:** D2L Discussion Board post topic - Intro & Screenwriting basics

Class 2 - Tuesday, Sept. 18

Due: Anchorman script coverage

Due: Discussion Board Topic

Lecture: Cinematic Storytelling Conventions. Comedy & Improvisation.

In Class Screening: Anchorman

**Homework:** Read "Blade Runner" Script coverage due submitted to D2L before class 3

**Homework:** D2L Discussions: "Anchorman"

### Class 3 - Tuesday, Sept. 25

Due: "Blade Runner" script coverage submitted to D2L dropbox.

Due: Post screening thoughts on "Anchorman"

Lecture: Story Structure.

In Class Screening: Blade Runner

**Homework:** Read "Drive." Script coverage for "Drive" due on D2L by the beginning of Class 4.

**Homework:** Post Screening Thoughts on D2L Discussion Board: "Blade Runner"

### Class 4 - Tuesday, Oct. 2

Due: "Drive" script coverage submitted to D2L dropbox.

Due: Post Screening Thoughts on D2L Discussion Board: "Prometheus"

Lecture: Character.

In Class Screening: Drive.

**Homework:** Read "Memento Mori" Short Story coverage due on D2L Submissions next week.

**Homework:** Post Screening Thoughts on D2L Discussions: "Drive"

### Class 5 - Tuesday, Oct. 9

Due: Script coverage for "Memento Mori" due on D2L

Due: Post Screening Thoughts on D2L Discussion Board: "Drive"

Lecture: Story Structures

In Class Screening: Memento

**HOMEWORK: MIDTERM ESSAY** - TO BE ANNOUNCED

### Class 6 - Tuesday, Oct. 16

Due: Midterm Essay

Due: Post Screening Thoughts on D2L Discussion Board: "Memento"

In Class Screening: Finding Joe

**Homework:** Read "Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption" Script coverage due Class 7.

**Homework:** Post Screening Thoughts on D2L Discussion Board: "Finding Joe"

### Class 7 - Tuesday, Oct. 23

Due: Read "Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption" Script coverage due Class 7.

Due: Post Screening Thoughts on D2L Discussion Board: "Finding Joe"

Lecture: Theme & Symbolism in Cinema.

In Class Screening: "Shawshank Redemption".

**Homework:** Post Screening Thoughts on D2L Discussion Board.

**Homework:** Watch SILENCE OF THE LAMBS on Coltube (it's also available on HBO, Prime Video & iTunes).

### Class 8 - Tuesday, Oct. 30

Due: Post Screening Thoughts on D2L Discussion Board.

Due: Read "Hated". Script coverage due Class 8.

Lecture: The Independent Film. Save the Cat - Silence of the Lambs.

In Class Screening: "Hated".

Homework: Watch Thelma and Louise. Write a 3-5 page essay citing the key plot points.

### Class 9 - Tuesday, Nov. 6

Due: Thelma & Louise Essay

Lecture: Thelma & Louise

In Class Screening: TBA

### Class 10 - Tuesday, Nov. 13

Lecture: Ensembles. Unity.

Screening: "Do the Right Thing"

**Final Homework Assignment:** Screenplay options to be announced.

Read the screenplay and write a 5 pages minimum (double spaced 12 point font) analysis of the project as to whether or not you would green light this movie and why. Make SURE your analysis includes your assessment of the script's story structure, character development, theme, dialogue, tone and tension. The analysis should not be a linear retelling of the script's plot. You MUST have a definitive opinion on the material and defend it with specific examples from the script that illustrate the storytelling conventions we've discussed this quarter. Remember, your opinion is not wrong as long as you can support it up with specific examples from the screenplay. Late submissions will not be accepted. 12 point font. PDF. Upload to Submissions.

### Class 11 - Tuesday, Nov. 20

Final Class. Screening to be announced.

Final Script coverage is due.

## **COURSE POLICIES:**

Attendance:

Each week's class consists of lectures. Your attendance is mandatory. For the purposes of this class, an absence is defined as either not showing up for class or showing up 15 minutes after class has begun. All absences will result in a reduction of the attendance/participation grade.

#### Assignments:

Reading assignments must be completed by the date to which they are assigned in the syllabus. Reasonable deadlines are given for completion for each assignment. Consequently late assignments will not be accepted. (Late assignment = F) *Exceptions: A.)* Medical emergency. You must contact me within 24 hours of the assignment due date and submit support documents within 48 hours of the assignment due date. *B.)* Personal emergency. If you miss an assignment deadline because of any other reason besides a medical one, you must submit compelling evidence supporting your excuse within 24 hours of the assignment due date.

#### Examinations:

There are no exams given in this course. You will be graded on your written work and class participation.

#### Plagiarism:

Plagiarism on assignments is a serious offense and earns the student a failing grade for the class. There are no exceptions to this rule. If you are in doubt about the definition of plagiarism, consult your student handbook.

#### Course Lectures/Reading Assignments:

Lecture presentations will occur weekly. In addition to the screenings, the screenplay readings are an integral part of the course learning. BOTH SOURCES ARE NEEDED.

#### Content Changes:

Depending on time factors, the assignments projected for the term may require alteration or rescheduling, as well as the lectures. Please bring either your laptop or something to take notes with for each class. Assignments should be typed and double-spaced in 12- point font, PDFs. All assignments are due at the beginning of class.

#### Sexual Harassment:

The policy as specified in the student handbook will be adhered to in this class.

#### 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