



DC 221
501

Film Structure for Majors

Winter 2018-2019

Room:

14 E. Jackson, LL105

Mondays 1:30 – 4:45pm

Instructor: José A. Soto

Office Hours: Mondays from 10:30 am to
1 pm and Wednesdays from
3 to 5.00 pm (Loop CDM 506)

Office Telephone: +1 (312) 362-5846

Email: jsoto23@depaul.edu

Course Description:

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.

Course Objectives:

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.

Students should note that this is an analytical course which requires them to read scripts and view complete movies prior to critiquing them. I encourage students to participate on the in-class discussions to further their understanding of these subjects, and to approach me about suggestions for more in-depth readings and/or projects related to film, screenwriting, as well as international or diverse content in movies.

Reading:

Assigned readings and handouts will be made available by the instructor.



Grading:

Final grades will be based on participation, screening and screenplay reading response papers, as well as a final essay.

1.- Screening and Screenplay reading papers – 60%

2.- Final Essay (Screening and Screenplay) – 30%

3.- Participation – 10%

Grading Standards:

Letter Grade	Minimum % of Total Points	Letter Grade	Minimum % of Total Points
A	92	C+	78
A-	90	C	72
B+	88	C-	70
B	82	D+	68
B-	80	D	60
		F	0

Course Policies:

1. Participation

At this level, students should be interested in the subject of the class. The only way to see this is through participation in class, either asking questions or adding constructive comments to other student's presentations. For on-line students this means contributing to the discussions forums offered each week.



2. Attendance

It does not constitute a specific part of your grade, but perfect attendance is required. Most of the information you need to complete your assignments will be discussed in-class; also examples of what you have to do will be given there. Subjects and/or assignments will not be discussed outside of the programmed sessions. However, if you have to miss a class or a deadline, make sure to plan ahead, and inform the instructor in advance. Calling in advance does not automatically excuse an absence or a missed deadline, but it is the only way to present your case. If you fail to communicate before the next class period to explain an absence or a missed deadline, they will not be excused. Please note that work, non-emergency medical and dental appointments, hangovers, intramural games, visitors from out of town, fixing your roommate's computer, fraternity/sorority events, arguments with boyfriends or girlfriends and studying for other classes do not constitute excused absences or missed assignments.

In order to petition for an excused absence, students who miss class due to illness or significant personal circumstances should complete the Absence Notification process through the Dean of Students office. The form can be accessed at <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/dos/forms.html>. Students must submit supporting documentation alongside the form. The professor reserves the sole right whether to offer an excused absence and/or academic accommodations for an excused absence.

3. Tardiness

One true thing in all professional fields is the lack of tolerance for tardiness. Employers do not generally abide such behavior, and employees who offer weak, irritating excuses frequently find themselves unemployed and unemployable. We will be working under the same rules.

Remember it is your responsibility to make the arrangements when a deadline or a class has to be missed. I will treat you professionally, expecting of you a responsible attitude. This means that it is you who must be worried about solving the problem, not me.

4. Missed Assignments

Since film is a serious industry, if you fail to turn in any of the assignments you will fail that assignment with a 0. There will be no exceptions. This is a zero-tolerance policy. I have no time or patience for those who are not going to take this class seriously. Many students have flunked my courses for this reason. If you cannot make it a priority to complete all assignments, you better consider not taking this course.

One more thing, turning-in an assignment does not guarantee you will have a passing grade, although the opposite will be true. Not turning them in will fail you inevitably.



5. Attitude

We are going to be spending a lot of time discussing movies and film structure. This will be made in an orderly fashion, no matter how vehemently we feel for an argument, we have to be able to provide it in a disciplined manner. It is better to wait and later speak than not speak at all. My evaluation of your attitude and attention will be based on your participation during discussions as much as it will be based on your assertiveness when making a comment. Students who are not insightful enough to value the learning opportunities inherent to this class tend to do poorly.

6. Use of Technology

Cellular phones and other similar devices will not be tolerated. In my mind, they are a clear indication of a bad attitude. I recommend students to turn off or switch to silence mode such devices. If your other commitments are so pressing that they cannot wait until the end of the session, it may be in your best interest to reconsider the priority you place on being here. In any case, students whose phones and/or computers make noise during class will be asked to leave immediately.

7. Uncivilized Behavior

Even though you are students who must constantly thrive to grow, we need to start acting professionally. This is why there will be no tolerance for uncivilized behavior. I require an orderly ambiance to be able to make the most of each session.

By accepting this syllabus, you are indicating that you understand my expectations for students concerning attitude and work ethic.

I reserve the right to drop any student with an F (0%) if he/she has excessive absences (more than two), engages in disruptive behavior, has a poor attitude, or in any other way is clearly not taking the class seriously.

8. Ethics

Although your grade does not contain an ethics component like some other courses, I require complete honesty in producing your work. Plagiarism is useless to you anyway. By having someone else do the work for you, you are missing an opportunity to immerse yourself in the film industry. You are also waiving your right to learn. If you are willing to do that, then you have to evaluate if it's worth the aggravation and the time you invest in this course.

By accepting this syllabus, you are indicating that you understand the seriousness of academic dishonesty and realize I will impose the harshest sanctions possible if I can prove you have engaged in such behavior. You are also indicating that you understand what constitutes academic dishonesty; I will not tolerate an excuse that claims the student did not know he/she was engaging in academic dishonesty.



9. Plagiarism

Plagiarism, cheating and/or fabrication will not be tolerated. They are serious offenses – both in the course and in film careers. Thus I reserve the right to drop any student with an F (0 points) if he/she engages in any form of academic dishonesty. I further reserve the right to recommend other sanctions as may be appropriate.

More information can be found at <http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/>.

10. 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.

11. 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.

The deadlines for submitting appeals are as follows:

Autumn Quarter: Last day of the last final exam of the subsequent winter quarter

Winter Quarter: Last day of the last final exam of the subsequent spring quarter

Spring Quarter: Last day of the last final exam of the subsequent autumn quarter

Summer Terms: Last day of the last final exam of the subsequent autumn quarter

12. Special Accommodations:

Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should inform 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:

Student Center, LPC, Suite #370

Phone number: (773)325.1677

Fax: (773)325.3720

TTY: (773)325.7296

13. 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 <http://policies.depaul.edu/policy/policy.aspx?pid=332>

Course Organization and Schedule:

We will meet at the 14 E. Jackson building in the Loop, Room LL105, Mondays at 1:30 pm. I will start the class with a review of the film viewed in the previous session. Then we will proceed with a lecture of the subject assigned for the class. Whenever the duration of the film permits it, will take a 15 minute break before we start the projection of the movie and then we will watch it. I will leave 10 minutes at the end of the class to comment on the film and answer any questions students might have about their assignments.

This syllabus is subject to modification; there may be several circumstances that will most likely change it. I reserve the right to amend the class schedule, or the syllabus if circumstances make it necessary. You may receive at least one revised syllabus or schedule before the quarter is over. If assignments or deadline dates change, I will inform you well in advance. Constantly reviewing D2L announcements and emails is recommended for these purposes.

1.- Elements of a Viable Screenplay (Conflict)

La Femme Nikita

Luc Besson
France
1990

Assignment: Screening Response 1, Script Reading 1

2.- Character and Psychology

The Florida Project

Sean Baker
USA
2017

Assignment: Screening Response 2

3.- Poetics - The Hero's Journey (Plot points)

Brazil

Terry Gilliam
England
1985

Assignment: Screening Response 3, Script Reading 2

4.-The Three Act Structure (Syd Field)

Lost in Translation

Sofia Coppola
USA
2003

Assignment: Screening Response 4, Script Reading 3

5.- Sequence Approach, Save the Cat.

High Noon

Fred Zinnemann
USA
1952

Assignment: Screening Response 5

6.- Parallel stories (Genre)

Hero

Zhang Yimou
China
2002

Assignment: Screening Response 6, Script Reading 4

7.- Ensemble - Number of Protagonists - Adaptation

The Departed

Martin Scorsese

USA

2006

Assignment: Screening Response 7

8.- Non Linear Estructures

Amores Perros

Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu

Mexico

2000

Assignment: Screening Response 8

9.- Episodic - Prequels and Sequels Narrative Conventions

Three Colors: Red

Krzysztof Kieslowski

Poland

1994

Assignment: Screening Response 9, Script Reading 5

10.- Ordering of Events - Oneiric Structure

The Shape of Water

Guillermo Del Toro

Mexico/USA

2018