

# SCWR 120 FILM STRUCTURES FOR MAJORS

SPRING 2021 | W 1:30-4:45 | Remote

Instructor: Wendy Roderweiss Office: CDM 513

Email: [wroderwe@depaul.edu](mailto:wroderwe@depaul.edu) (please allow 24 hours for a response)

Course Management system: D2L

Type of Instruction: Sync and Async Lecture/discussion, screenings

Drop dates and deadlines: <https://academics.depaul.edu/calendar/Pages/default.aspx>

Office Hours: W 12:00-1:30pm (via Zoom, sign up on bluestar for an appt.)

Prerequisites: None

This syllabus is subject to change (Document date 3/18/21)

## **Course Description:**

A 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 multiple genres and eras by creators with a diverse range of intersectional identities 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 Outcomes:** In addition to other short writing assignments, students will complete four analysis papers covering 3-act Structure, Hero's Journey, Ensemble and Sequence Method.

## **Learning Objectives:**

Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to:

- identify the relationship between character development and story structure across a variety of films featuring a diverse range of characters, communities, and perspectives
- 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

## **How learning Outcomes Will Be Met**

Assignments will be drawn from the films screened for class, course lectures, and the reading material posted online.

## **Textbooks and printed resources:**

All reading required for this course will be provided via D2L.

## **Required Software/Hardware:**

Word processing program for written assignments.

Adobe Acrobat for making pdfs

Computer/internet access and D2L for assignment submission, film screenings, discussions etc

## **Grading:**

ASSIGNMENTS: There are four assignments that will be posted on D2L. Late work will not be accepted.

Assignment #1 3-Act Structure Breakdown 15%

Assignment #2 Hero's Journey Breakdown 15%

Assignment #3 Ensemble Argument Paper 20%

Assignment #4 Sequence Breakdown 20%

Weekly Film/Script Responses 20%

Weekly Class participation via D2L (includes watching lectures, recorded class sessions and discussion posts): 10%

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

Grading Rubric/Standards for Achievement:

Grade A:

Student performs in an outstanding way. Student exhibits achievement and craftsmanship in all work. Student exhibits commitment to expanding ideas, vocabulary and performance.

Grade B:

Student performs beyond the requirement of the project. Student exhibits above average progress and craftsmanship. Student exhibits above average interest in expanding idea, vocabulary, and performance.

Grade C:

Criteria of assignment is met, and all requirements are fulfilled. Student shows average quality work and minimum time and effort on projects. Student shows moderate interest.

Grade D:

Student performance is uneven and below average. Requirements for projects are only partially fulfilled. Minimal interest is shown and attendance, participation and involvement are inadequate.

Grade F

Student fails to meet minimum course requirements and shows no interest. Levels of participation and craftsmanship are extremely poor. Student's attendance is inadequate.

### **Course Practices**

*Viewing practices:* Students are expected to stay alert and watch all films without distraction. Movies should be the only thing on your screen and phones must be put away during screenings. Viewing and being able to discuss the films is part of your overall participation grade.

*Reading assignments:* Students are expected to fully complete assigned readings on time so they are prepared for class discussions and writing assignments. Reading matters. When done well, it is the most effective and efficient way to access another's intelligence, experience, and wisdom. Students who manage their time to allow for careful reading will more successfully learn and participate in this course.

*Writing assignments:* This course requires students to write analytically (analysis essays) both formally and informally. All formal compositions are expected to be typed, properly formatted, and carefully proofread.

*Class discussion practices:* Students are expected to actively participate in class discussions. This requires the ability to listen with intention, speak with purpose, and enter class prepared. Students are expected to ask relevant questions, answer questions with clarity & precision, support claims with detailed evidence from films/readings/notes, elaborate on own ideas & those of classmates, make connections between related concepts, acknowledge & respect multiple perspectives, and be on topic.

**Attendance and Participation:**

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. Absences are defined below based on which section you are in.

*Synchronous Section:*

Attendance: Sync students are expected to be in the zoom class each week and will be marked absent if they are not present.

Participation-Lectures: Each week there is a recorded lecture that must be viewed by all students before the next week's class (both sections). These lectures must be viewed in their entirety. Any missed, or partially watched lectures will constitute a drop in the participation grade.

Participation-Film/Script Response: Each week you will complete a 500 word response to the film and script assigned. Format: PDF.

Participation-Discussion Forum: On D2L there is a community discussion forum. Please respond weekly to the posed question.

*Asynchronous Section:*

Attendance: Async students are expected to watch the recording of the discussion each week and will be marked absent if they do not watch the recorded session. Async students are ENCOURAGED to join the live zoom class if they can, it will be fun!

Participation-Lectures: Each week there is a recorded lecture that must be viewed by all students before the next week's class (both sections) These lectures must be viewed in their entirety. Any missed, or partially watched lectures will constitute a drop in the participation grade.

Participation-Film/Script Response: Each week you will complete a 500 word response to the film and script assigned. Format: PDF.

Participation-Discussion Forum: On D2L there is a community discussion forum. Please respond weekly to the posed question.

**Course Management:**

This course is housed and managed on **D2L**. To log on, go to <https://d2l.depaul.edu/> and enter using your campus connect login and password. There, you will find recorded lectures, recorded class discussion, the required reading material, your assignments, and, as the quarter progresses – your current grade. Also posted on D2L will be weekly discussion forums for questions and thoughts concerning the films, lectures, assignments and the course itself which are part of the course participation grade.

The films screened in class, as well as those which require individual viewing, are available on Panopto, which will be embedded in the weekly course materials on d2l under “Content”.

**Content Changes** – Depending on time factors, the assignments projected for the term may require slight alteration or rescheduling. I will contact you via email with any deviations from the syllabus. Please ensure that mail sent to the email address that you provided to the school is readily accessible.

### **Zoom Policies**

The DePaul [Code of Student Responsibility](#) applies to online behavior as well as in-person or classroom behavior. The following are policies for the course meetings with Zoom:

- General – Sign in with your preferred first name and last name. If you do not have access to a computer or smartphone with internet access, call into class. This is not optimal; try to locate an internet-enabled device to use for this course. Please stay engaged in class activities. Close any apps on your device that are not relevant and turn off notifications.
- Video – Turn on your video when possible. It is helpful to be able to see each other, just as in an in-person class. You may elect to turn off your video if you have limited internet bandwidth, no webcam or if you're unable to find an environment without a lot of visual distractions.
- Audio – Mute your microphone when you are not talking if you are in a noisy environment. We have a small class, so I'd like to keep our mics open whenever possible. Be in a quiet place and turn off any music, videos, etc. in the background.

**Online Format:** In my experience students taking courses online can easily fall behind. I strongly suggest you keep a rigid schedule when it comes to viewing films, doing the reading, watching the lectures, and completing the assignments. This is not a hard course until you fall behind, at which point it becomes incredibly difficult to succeed.

# SCHEDULE

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## Character and Three-Act Structure

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Week 1: 3/31

Sync on Zoom: Course introduction, Lecture on character and story terms and concepts  
Recorded Lecture: Three Act Structure Lecture  
Watch: *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, 1975 d. Milos Foreman  
Read: Script for *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, w. Lawrence Hauben & Bo Goldman  
Glossary of Terms, Daniel  
Screenwriting Tools, Howard  
What is a Screenplay?, Field  
Write: Film/Script Response  
Discussion post

Week 2: 4/7

Sync on Zoom: Breakdown and discussion of Cuckoo's Nest  
Recorded Lecture: Schechter Character Breakdown  
Watch: *Wonderboys*, 2000 d. Curtis Hanson  
Read: Script for *Wonderboys*, w. Steve Kloves  
Structure and Character, McKee  
Classic Screenplay Structure, Howard  
JA Schechter on Character Arc  
Write: Film/Script Response  
Discussion post

ASSIGNMENT #1 3-Act Structure breakdown of *Enough Said*, 2013 d/w Nicole Holofcener

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## The Hero's Journey

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Week 3: 4/14

Sync on Zoom: Breakdown and discussion *Wonderboys*  
Schechter breakdown of Cuckoo's Nest  
Recorded Lecture: Hero's Journey  
Watch: *The Silence of the Lambs*, 1991, d. Jonathan Demme  
Read: Script for *The Silence of the Lambs*, w. Ted Tally  
Write: Film/Script Response  
Discussion post

Week 4: 4/21

**ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE**

Sync on Zoom: Breakdown and discussion *Enough Said*  
Breakdown and discussion *Silence of the Lambs*  
Recorded Lecture: None this week

Watch: *Black Panther*, 2018 d. Ryan Coogler  
Read: Script for *Black Panther*, w. Ryan Coogler & Joe Robert Cole  
J. Campbell excerpt from “The Hero with a Thousand Faces”  
C. Vogler excerpt from “The Writer’s Journey”  
Write: Film/Script Response  
Discussion post

ASSIGNMENT TWO Hero’s Journey Breakdown of *The Imitation Game* (2014, d. Morten Tyldum, w. Graham Moore)

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### Parallel Narrative-Ensemble

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Week 5: 4/28

Sync on Zoom: Breakdown and discussion *Black Panther*  
Recorded Lecture: Parallel Narrative-Ensemble/Multiple protagonist Narrative  
Watch: *Hidden Figures*, 2016 d. Theodore Melfi  
Read: Six Sorts of Parallel Narrative, Aronson  
Script for *Hidden Figures* w. Allison Schroeder & Theodore Melfi  
Write: Film/Script Response  
Discussion post

Week 6: 5/5

#### ASSIGNMENT #2 DUE

Sync on Zoom: Breakdown and discussion *The Imitation Game*  
Breakdown and discussion *Hidden Figures*  
Recorded Lecture: None this week  
Watch: *The Philadelphia Story*, 1940 d. George Cukor, w. Donald Ogden Stewart  
Read: Essay on Ensemble films, Cowgill  
No script this week-unavailable  
Write: Film/Script Response  
Discussion post

ASSIGNMENT THREE Is *Lars and the Real Girl*, (2007 d. Craig Gillespie, w. Nancy Oliver) an Ensemble film or not? You make the argument.

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### Parallel Narrative-Dual/Multi Protagonist

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Week 7: 5/12

Sync on Zoom: Breakdown and discussion *The Philadelphia Story*  
Recorded Lecture: Dual Protagonist/Double Journey  
Watch: *Lost in Translation*, 2003 d. Sofia Coppola  
Read: Script for *Lost in Translation* w. Sofia Coppola  
Write: Film/Script Response

Discussion post

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### Alternative Narrative

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Week 8: 5/19

**ASSIGNMENT #3 DUE**

Sync on Zoom: Breakdown and discussion *Lars and The Real Girl*  
Breakdown and discussion *Lost in Translation*

Recorded Lectures: Alternative Narrative/Atypical Structure

Watch: *Two For The Road*, 1967 d. Stanley Donen, w. Frederic Raphael

Read: No Reading this week- Script Unavailable

Write: Film/Script Response  
Discussion post

Week 9: 5/26

Sync on Zoom: Breakdown and discussion *Two For The Road*

Watch: *Out of the Past*, 1947 d. Jacques Tourneur

Read: Script for *Out of the Past*, w. Daniel Mainwaring  
Gulino On Sequences  
Save the Cat Intro  
Save the Cat Beat Sheet

Write: Film/Script Response  
Discussion post

Recorded Lectures: Sequence Approach  
Save the Cat

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### Sequence Approach/Save the Cat

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Week 10: 6/2

Sync on Zoom: Breakdown and discussion *Out of the Past*  
Discussion of Sequences

Watch: *Coco*, 2017 d. Adrian Molina & Lee Unkrich

Read: Script for *Coco*, w. Adrian Molina & Mathew Aldrich  
PDF breakdown of Sequences for *Gladiator*, *Mean Girls*, *Thelma and Louise* Also includes Save the Cat for *Thelma and Louise*

Write: Film/Script Response  
Discussion post

Recorded Lectures: None this week

ASSIGNMENT FOUR Watch *Coco* and do a Sequence by Sequence Breakdown

Week 11: 6/9

**ASSIGNMENT #4 Due Friday 6/11**

Sync on Zoom: No meeting this week, work on your sequence breakdowns

## **COURSE POLICIES**

### **Additional Policies and Information:**

#### **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.

#### **Preferred Name and 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>

#### **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](#). Please see <https://resources.depaul.edu/teaching-commons/teaching/Pages/online-teaching-evaluations.aspx> for additional information.

#### **Academic Integrity and Plagiarism**

This course will be subject to the university's academic integrity policy. More information can be found at <https://resources.depaul.edu/teaching-commons/teaching/academic-integrity/Pages/default.aspx>.

#### **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>

#### **Withdrawal**

Students who withdraw from the course do so by using the Campus Connection system at <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. 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

### **Excused Absence**

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.

### **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 <http://www.cdm.depaul.edu/Current%20Students/Pages/Grading-Policies.aspx>

### **Online Office Hours**

Faculty should be accessible to students using Zoom, Skype or other similar platforms for the duration of the office hours. Faculty must be accessible on the designated platform for the duration of the office hours.

[https://offices.depaul.edu/student-affairs/resources/faculty-staff/faculty-questions/Documents/Faculty\\_Resources\\_Online\\_Classroom.pdf](https://offices.depaul.edu/student-affairs/resources/faculty-staff/faculty-questions/Documents/Faculty_Resources_Online_Classroom.pdf)

### **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:

Student Center, LPC, Suite #370

Phone number (Lincoln Park Campus): (773)325.1677

Phone number (Loop Campus): (312)362.8002

Fax: (773)325.3720

TTY: (773)325.7296

Email: [csd@depaul.edu](mailto:csd@depaul.edu)

Students who register with the Center for Students with Disabilities are also invited to contact Dr. Gregory Moorhead, Director of the Center, privately to discuss how he may assist in facilitating the

accommodations to be used in a course. This is best done early in the term. The conversation will remain confidential to the extent possible.

Please see <https://offices.depaul.edu/student-affairs/about/departments/Pages/csd.aspx> for Services and Contact Information.