

FILM 430 Fundamentals of Short Film

Fall 2022 | Monday 5:45-9:00pm | 247 S. Wabash, 708

Instructor: Wendy Roderweiss Office: CDM 513

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

Office Hours: W 5:00-5:30 (on zoom, sign up on bluestar for an appt.) W 9:00-10:00pm in the classroom

Type of Instruction: Seminar/Lecture

Course Management System: D2L

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

This syllabus is subject to change (Document date 10/1/22)

Course description and objectives:

Students will study approximately 100 well-crafted and landmark short films from throughout film history. Through these screenings, students will learn film vernacular, the roles these short films served their respective filmmakers and the concept of how "calling card" shorts can be used to illustrate a filmmaker's voice. Short film genres and styles that will be explored will include: narrative, experimental, documentary and animation, ranging from early silent films to contemporary films being screened at festivals today. PREREQUISITE(S): None

Class goals:

- Expose MFA students to numerous notable short films, in which the vast breadth of the filmic language will be digested, analyzed and discussed.
- Illustrate how a quality short film has benefitted some of the most noteworthy and successful filmmakers from the past 80 years.
- Enable students to grasp the evolution of the short proof-of-concept to a fully-formed feature film.

Learning outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course:

- Students will further develop their understanding of film vernacular or the "filmic language".
- Students will be able to comment on the relationship between form and content in a work.
- Students will develop an understanding of how a completed short film can serve a filmmaker professionally.
- 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 discuss a "work of art" in terms of contemporaneous aesthetic, social, or political context, discussing how these might shape the work's reception and how that reception might differ amongst various peoples and historical periods.

TEXTBOOKS AND PRINTED RESOURCES

Handouts provided by the Instructor

Optional--“Discovering Short Films: The History and Style of Live-Action Fiction Shorts”

Cynthia Felando

Publisher: Springer

ISBN: 9781137484369

Possible additional website content provided by instructor via:

D2L, Panopto, Netflix, Short of the Week, Hulu, Vimeo

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 the required reading material, your assignment details and where to submit them, links to films, your current grade, and anything else you might need for the course.

COURSE POLICIES:

Grading:

Class attendance and participation 30%

Leading a film discussion 10%

Paper 1 — 30%

Paper 2 — 30%

Grading Scale:

A indicates excellence

B indicates good work

C indicates satisfactory work

D work is unsatisfactory in some respect

F is substantially unsatisfactory work

93-100: A, 90-92: A-, 87-89: B+, 83-86: B, 80- 82: B-, 77-79: C+, 73-76: C, 70-72: C-, 60-66: D, 67-69:D+, 65-0: F

SOFTWARE

Word processing software

PDF software

SCREENS

The use of screens; phones, laptops, tablets etc, are not allowed in class. We will be watching and discussing films, and secondary devices have no role in this course.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:

Attendance –Each week’s class consists of lectures, discussions and screenings; attendance is critical and mandatory and constitutes 30% of your grade. An absence is defined as not showing up for class, or arriving more than 15 minutes late, or missing any 15 minute period during class

time. I take attendance every class. If you arrive less than 15 minutes late, and do not hear your name called, make sure you let me know you are present so I do not mark you absent. Any absences will result in a reduction of the attendance/participation grade. **Anyone who misses 3 classes will automatically drop a letter grade. Anyone who misses 4 classes will automatically fail.** However, if you are legitimately sick, please email me BEFORE class if you are going to be absent.

Class Participation—Along with showing up, you are expected to join in class discussions. This is a seminar style class, so your participation is required. You also have a weekly reading assignment which is part of your participation.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Film Journals:

We will be watching films in class and at home. You will write a response to each film that includes the following:

- Name of the film and Director
- Short Synopsis- 1-2 sentences max
- What is this film about?
- Describe one thing you learned about filmmaking from watching this short (Be sure to include something from the film's language that was noteworthy. This can include, Mise-en-scène, style, tone, visual design, sound design, editing, pacing, creative voice etc.)
- Your overall reaction to the film

For the films we watch at home, please be more detailed in your responses as our class discussion of these films may be briefer.

Weekly Readings:

For your weekly reading, choose at least one of the films from the at-home viewing list and find an interview with the filmmaker, or an article about the making of the film. Bring that information to class with you to reference in our discussion.

Leading a film discussion:

You will lead the discussion for at least one film in the quarter. You are expected to prepare background for the film and contextualization and facilitate the class discussion of this work.

Paper 1: Due Week 7

What makes for an "ideal" short film? What's an example of a short film that we have seen in class that embodies these ideal elements of a short film. This is obviously entirely subjective and most important to me is the articulation and support of your ideas. You should include examples of elements of films that you've liked and, as importantly, examples of elements that you haven't liked from films we've seen thus far.

This should be in proper paper form, meaning that you have a thesis statement and supporting ideas, as well as a solid conclusion. This is not a stream of consciousness blog post.

The length of this paper should be no fewer than 1250 words and no longer than 2000 words.

This paper should be submitted into the D2L submissions folder for this topic before the start of class.

Paper 2: Due Week 11

Having ingested over 100 short films over the course of this quarter, describe a short film of your own design that doesn't exist yet. What's the story (in a brief synopsis or beat-by-beat format)? What are films that you've seen that embody characteristics that you aspire to employ in your own short film? How do you envision your short film would be shot and/or created? What would you "do" with this short film upon its completion as a script or as a finished film? Would you take it to festivals? Would it serve you as a proof-of-concept? If it's a calling card film, what would you aspire to parlay it into? Would you want to make a feature film or TV series out of it? Lastly, why would you want to make this movie? (If you can't find something of your own that you want to write, please describe a short film that you'd like to see.)

The length of this paper should be no fewer than 1000 words and no longer than 1500 words. If you want to attach a look-book or include a page of links and or references, those shouldn't be included in your word count.

This paper should be submitted into the D2L submissions folder for this topic by 5:45 pm on Monday 11/21.

SUBMISSION FORMAT

Assignments should be submitted as PDF files to the appropriate submissions folders on D2L. Files should be saved as YourName.AssignmentName.PDF.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Late assignments are not accepted. In case of illness, please contact me PRIOR to the due date. It shows that you care, and that goes a long way with me.

Schedule

Week 1 9/12

Note: This class meeting will be on zoom

Overview of syllabus, class, me and you.

Screenings: A Potpourri of Short Films

Week 2 9/19

In the Beginning

Week 3 9/26

International Shorts

Week 4 10/1
Omnibus films

Week 5 10/10
Documentary

Week 6 10/17
Experimental
Assignment: Paper #1, Due 10/24

Week 7 10/24
Due: Paper #1
Animation

Week 8 10/31
Calling Card Films and Festival Favorites Pt. I

Week 9 11/7
Calling Card Films and Festival Favorites Pt. II, Viral Sensations

Week 10 11/14
Faculty Films
Assignment: Paper #2 due 11/21

COURSE POLICIES AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Covid 19 Health and Safety Precautions: Starting April 11, 2022 masks will no longer be required in classrooms and labs, but are still encouraged and recommended. If you need one, masks are available at a limited number of first-floor desk areas near building entrances.

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>

Respect for Diversity and Inclusion: At DePaul, our mission calls us to explore “what must be done” in order to respect the inherent dignity and identity of each human person. We value diversity because it is part of our history, our traditions, and our future. We see diversity as an asset and a strength that adds to the richness of classroom learning. In my course, I strive to include diverse authors, perspectives and teaching pedagogies. I also encourage open dialogue and spaces for students to express their unique identities and perspectives. I am open to having difficult conversations and I will strive to create an inclusive classroom that values all perspectives. If at any time the classroom experience does not live up to this expectation, please feel free to contact me via email or during office hours.

Content Labels: The films, lectures, and discussion in this course may engage deeply with potentially sensitive or traumatizing material, such as: violence, sexual assault/rape, sexism, racism, police brutality, transphobia, homophobia, abuse, suicide, blood, and body-shaming. I will note especially graphic/intense content and will do my best to foster a classroom in which we can relate courageously, compassionately, and contemplatively with difficult and important content each week.

If you would like more specific or personalized content labels identified throughout the course (especially ones that are not named above), please e-mail and I will do my level best to flag them. I am also happy to discuss alternatives to the required viewing if necessary.

As instructors, we might sometimes fail to flag content that a student identifies as harmful. No matter the reason, understand that I feel that the best response to such a failure is to apologize sincerely, ask for clarification (if needed), and make necessary adjustments to future courses. We can't know everything that is going to impact every student in our classes, but we can respond with humility and compassion when our students let us know how to be better.

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: 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. 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!

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: DePaul University is a learning community that fosters the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas within a context that emphasizes a sense of responsibility for oneself, for others and for society at large. Violations of academic integrity, in any of their forms, are, therefore, detrimental to the values of DePaul, to the students' own development as responsible members of society, and to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Violations include but are not limited to the following categories: cheating; plagiarism; fabrication; falsification or sabotage of research data; destruction or misuse of the university's academic resources; alteration or falsification of academic records; and academic misconduct. Conduct that is punishable under the Academic Integrity Policy could result in additional disciplinary actions by other university officials and possible civil or criminal prosecution. Please refer to your Student Handbook or visit Academic Integrity at DePaul University (<http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu>) for further details.

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>

Copyright Statement: The materials provided by the instructor in this course are for the use of the students enrolled in the course. Copyrighted course materials may not be further disseminated.

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>

Students with Disabilities: Students seeking disability-related accommodations are required to register with DePaul's Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) enabling you to access accommodations and support services to assist your success. There are two office locations:

Loop Campus - Lewis Center #1420 - (312) 362-8002

Lincoln Park Campus - Student Center #370 - (773) 325-1677

Students can also email the office at csd@depaul.edu

Students who are registered with the Center for Students with Disabilities are also invited to contact me privately to discuss how I may assist in facilitating the accommodations you will use in this course. This is best done early in the term. Our conversation will remain confidential to the extent possible.

Writing Center: I strongly recommend you make use of the Writing Center throughout your time at DePaul. The Writing Center provides free peer writing tutoring for DePaul students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Writing Center tutors work with writers at all stages of the writing process, from invention to revision, and they are trained to identify recurring issues in your writing as well as address any specific questions or areas that you want to talk about. Visit www.depaul.edu/writing for more information.

Dean of Students Office: The [Dean of Students Office \(DOS\)](#) promotes student learning and ethical decision making in an inclusive and validating environment. Utilizing a comprehensive approach to student advocacy that is informed by DePaul's Catholic, Vincentian, and urban mission, the office collaborates with students, staff, faculty, parents and community partners to support students in reaching their academic and personal success. The Dean of Students Office is primarily responsible for administering and adjudicating violations of the Code of Student Responsibility at DePaul University. Additionally, the office provides the administrative withdrawal and absence notification process, and can help students identify campus and community resources in times of personal and/or family crises and medical emergencies.

University Counseling Services

- Free, goal-focused, collaborative, short-term, confidential, individual, and group counseling services for DePaul's students.
- Brief Screening & Consultations (BSC) over the phone.
- Drop-in Emergent Care Services during office hours (Monday to Friday: 10 am to 4 pm).
- Collaboration with faculty, staff, family, and friends who want to support student care.
- Psychoeducational workshops and presentations for a variety of topics including adaptive coping skills, stress management, effective communication, relationships, time management, mindfulness, etc.
- Assistance with community based referrals for therapy and psychiatry services.

To speak directly to a therapist 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, students should call 773-325-CARE (2273) and Press "1" when prompted.

To schedule an on-campus brief screening and consultation, students should call 773-325-CARE (2273) during regular business hours and Press "2" when prompted. More info can be found here:

<https://offices.depaul.edu/student-affairs/about/departments/Pages/ucaps.aspx>

The Help Desk: The Help Desk provides technical assistance via phone, email and web for current DePaul students, faculty and staff. The Help Desk supports computers, network access, telephones, email accounts, and university instructional and administrative software. They can troubleshoot and resolve hardware and software related issues with both the Mac and Windows operating systems. Visit <https://depaul.service-now.com/sp> to get help.

Emergency Plan: An emergency can occur at any time, suddenly and without warning. Proper planning is essential to minimize the impact of any emergency on the university community, operations and facilities. The following link provides detailed information on Emergency Evacuation and Fire Alarm [safety](#). The University will use the DPU Alert to announce school closing or other emergencies. In the event of an emergency evacuation, the primary outdoor assembly area for CDM will be Grant Park (Southeast corner of Jackson and Michigan Ave).