

# SCWR 425 Genre Storytelling

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**When:** Tuesday · 5:45pm – 9:00pm  
**Where:** 14 East Jackson / RM 209 / Loop Campus

**Instructor:** Matt Quinn · [mquinn@cdm.depaul.edu](mailto:mquinn@cdm.depaul.edu) · 312-362-5807 · CDM 509  
**Office hours:** Tuesday · 2:00pm – 5:00pm & Wednesday · 2:00pm – 5:00pm

## Summary of Course

This advanced course examines the dramatic conventions of genre storytelling in film and television. Through extensive script readings and discussions, students will deconstruct the common features of genre in an effort to discern audience expectations and develop a methodology for narrative innovation in their own work. In addition to evaluating films and series of varying genres, students will examine work by, for, and about a diverse range of intersectional characters and creators reflective of our communities.

## Course Objectives

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

- explain how genres have evolved over time, the innovations shaping them today, as well as possible future iterations they might have
- differentiate the common features in genre, describing how narrative and aesthetic elements comprise a particular style across a diverse range of films and series featuring a diverse range of characters, communities, and perspectives
- discuss the manner in which story structure is influenced by genre
- analyze nontraditional narratives as a counterpoint to “Classic Hollywood” conventions
- demonstrate a cinematic vocabulary to discuss films and television series critically and creatively

## Prerequisites

None

## Grading

Class Attendance and Participation	10%
Screening Response Assignments	70%
Final Paper	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.

### **Textbooks / Streaming Service**

Readings provided by instructor. In lieu of a textbook, student should have access to Netflix streaming service for the duration of the quarter

### **Attendance**

Attendance and participation are mandatory. An absence, which is defined as not showing up to class or arriving more than 10 minutes late to class, constitutes a reduction in your overall grade.

### **D2L**

You will be using D2L extensively in this course. To log on, go to:

<https://login.depaul.edu/ldap/login?service=https%3a%2f%2fd2l.depaul.edu%2fd2l%2fcustom%2fcas> and enter using your campus connect logon and password. Once you are logged on, click on the course number link and you will find links to the syllabus, course outline, video lectures, discussion forums, weekly assignments, etc.

### **Course Outline**

#### **Week 1 – September 14<sup>th</sup>**

Lecture: Course Intro, Genre and Audience

*Assignment: Screening Response 1, Script Reading and Screening 1*

#### **Week 2 – September 21<sup>st</sup>**

Lecture: Character and Conflict

*Assignment: Screening Response 2, Script Reading and Screening 2*

#### **Week 3 – September 28<sup>th</sup>**

Lecture: Feature Storytelling Conventions

*Assignment: Screening Response 3, Script Reading and Screening 3*

#### **Week 4 – October 5<sup>th</sup>**

Lecture: Television Storytelling Conventions

*Assignment: Screening Response 4, Script Reading and Screening 4*

#### **Week 5 – October 12<sup>th</sup>**

Lecture: Drama, Procedurals, Primetime Soaps, and Half-Hour Drama

*Assignment: Screening Response 5, Script Reading and Screening 5, Screening Response 6, Script Reading and Screening 6*

### **Week 6 – October 19<sup>th</sup>**

Lecture: Comedy, Romantic Comedy, and the Situational Comedy

*Assignment: Screening Response 7, Script Reading and Screening 7, Screening Response 8, Script Reading and Screening 8*

### **Week 7 – October 26<sup>th</sup>**

Lecture: Horror and Science Fiction

*Assignment: Screening Response 9, Script Reading and Screening 9, Screening Response 10, Script Reading and Screening 10*

### **Week 8 – November 2<sup>nd</sup>**

Lecture: Action, Thriller, and The Genre Show

*Assignment: Screening Response 11, Script Reading and Screening 11, Screening Response 12, Script Reading and Screening 12*

### **Week 9 – November 9<sup>th</sup>**

Lecture: Animation, The Family Film, and Children's Television

*Assignment: Screening Response 13, Script Reading and Screening 13, Screening Response 14, Script Reading and Screening 14*

### **Week 10 – November 16<sup>th</sup>**

Lecture: Genre Hybrids and the Future of Cinematic Storytelling

*Assignment: Final Paper*

### **Week 11 – November 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Final Paper Due

## **Assignments**

### **Screening Response Assignments (70% of final grade)**

The instructor will post a topic for you to write about after each class in regards to the lecture, screening(s), and corresponding screenplay/reading assignment(s). Your response must be a minimum of 500 words for each Screening Response Assignment, which is essentially two double spaced typed Word document pages. The document should be saved as a PDF and submitted to the corresponding D2L Submission link by the assigned due date. There is a total of 14 Screening Response assignments for the quarter, each work five points.

### **Final Paper (20% of final grade)**

Write an analysis using the storytelling conventions we have discussed throughout the quarter on

one screenplay of your choosing from a list of screenplays provided by the instructor. The analysis should NOT be a linear retelling of the script's plot. You must discuss the narrative devices employed throughout to build a cohesive and engaging narrative or, depending on your argument, why the current draft of the script will fail to connect with an audience. You MUST have a definitive opinion on the material and defend it with specific examples from the script that illustrate the conventions discussed this quarter – Don't waiver.

The paper is due via the corresponding D2L Submission assignment link on Tuesday, November 23<sup>rd</sup> by 5:45pm. No late assignments will be accepted. A few things to keep in mind:

- Remember, your opinion is not wrong as long as you can support it with specific examples from the film.
- In an effort to present your work objectively, please do not use any personal pronouns when referring to your opinion, such as "I feel this film exhibits poor structure" – It is clear you are saying it because the entire paper is your opinion.
- The paper must be no less than four pages - MLA Formatting Required  
<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

### Changes to the 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.

### COVID Social Distance and Mask Policy

Keeping our DePaul community safe is of utmost importance in the pandemic. Students, faculty and staff are expected to (1) wear a mask as required at all times while indoors on campus; (2) refrain from eating and drinking in classrooms; (3) keep current with their COVID-19 vaccinations or exemptions; (4) stay home if sick; (5) participate in any required COVID-19 testing; (6) complete the online Health and Safety Guidelines for Returning to Campus training; and (7) abide by the City of Chicago Emergency Travel Advisory. By doing these things, we are Taking Care of DePaul, Together. The recommendations may change as local, state, and federal guidelines evolve. Students who do not abide by the mask requirement may be subject to the student conduct process and will be referred to the Dean of Students Office. Students who have a medical reason for not complying with any requirements should register with DePaul's Center for Student with Disabilities (CSD).

### Respect for Diversity and Inclusion at DePaul University

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.

## 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. 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. All students are expected to abide by the University's Academic Integrity Policy which prohibits cheating and other misconduct in student coursework. Publicly sharing or posting online any prior or current materials from this course (including exam questions or answers), is considered to be providing unauthorized assistance prohibited by the policy. Both students who share/post and students who access or use such materials are considered to be cheating under the Policy and will be subject to sanctions for violations of Academic Integrity.

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>

## 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>

### **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](mailto: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.

### **University Counseling Services**

DePaul University Counseling Services (UCS) is committed to providing a range of culturally aware and sensitive clinical services to help currently enrolled DePaul students remove barriers to academic and personal success by addressing emotional, psychological, and interpersonal concerns through multiple treatment modalities. Services offered include: group counseling, individual counseling, couples counseling, crisis management, consultation, referrals, and telereach/outreach workshops. All services are currently being offered on a virtual, remote basis with no fees due to COVID-19. To connect with the counseling center, contact our main number at (773) 325-7779 during regular business hours (Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm) to schedule an initial consultation, which is typically scheduled within 1-2 business days of your call.

If you need more immediate assistance or are in acute distress, you can call the main number during regular business hours and ask to speak with a counselor. If you are experiencing a life-threatening emergency, call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room. The Counseling Services staff has extensive experience with providing support services to individuals of varying social

identities and backgrounds. Further, our counselors know that commitment to diversity, inclusivity, and anti-racism is an ongoing and open-ended journey and, as such, our counselors frequently and regularly engage in self-reflection and training opportunities to increase cultural awareness and to challenge one's own privileges and biases.