

## **FIS 720 – Advanced Cinematic Structure**

**Objective:** To engage the student in the analytical study of the structure of the feature length screenplay with particular attention to structure within scenes of a script and how they relate to each other. This is a form of structural theory first advanced by Aristotle in ancient Greek times and the student will apply several of the concepts from the “Poetics” in implementing his/her analysis.

**Outcome and Evaluation:** By the end of this course the student shall be able to identify and describe the basic structural elements of a screen story and to analyze how these elements are essential to cinematic structure. The student will be expected to recognize and recall these structural elements as well as a series of critical terms used to describe them. The student shall be able to evaluate these structural elements across a wide variety of cinematic genres. The class format will be lecture, viewing of motion picture and class discussion and analysis. Evaluation of this process will be based on oral and written presentations conducted throughout the course of the semester, culminating in a written final examination. The provided list of terms and elements will be required.

**Process:** The process will consist of start/stop viewing of a motion picture before and after a complete screening. The instructor will lead initial discussion, then begin to assign scenes to students to have them lead discussion of the dynamic. The students will be allowed varying degrees of preparation for their leadership roles until the analytical process becomes immediate and natural. This will culminate in a written final exam.

The oral and written presentations will consist of 60% of the grade and the final will make up the remaining 40%.

### **Schedule of Classes:**

Jan 23 – Intro Aristotle and story elements. Discussion. Intro Citizen Kane.

Jan 30 – Citizen Kane screening and discussion. Analysis.

Feb 6 – Review Kane – revisit scenes. Intro Lawrence of Arabia Prep scenes

Feb 13 – Lawrence of Arabia screening.

Feb 27 – Lawrence of Arabia discussion and scene analysis. Intro The Searchers

Mar 6 – The Searchers screening and discussion.

Mar 13 – Mid-Term Presentations with The Searchers scene work. Intro All About Eve.

Mar 20 – All About Eve screening and discussion.

Apr 3 – Spring Break

Apr 10 – Review of All About Eve and scene analysis. Intro My Left Foot

Apr 24 – My Left Foot screening and discussion. Intro Liberty Valance

May 1 – The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance screening and discussion.

May 8 – Film TBA

May 15 – Final Exam and peer presentations.

## Structural Elements

Three-act structure  
Story parameters (rules of universe)  
Dramatic action  
Objective  
Unity of Action  
Unity of place  
Unity of time  
Emotional investment/rooting interest  
Rising action/obstacle placement  
Character definition-action

## Terms

deus ex machina  
comedy of manners  
picaresque  
satire  
film noir  
myth-epic  
macguffin  
irony  
parody

## IMPORTANT

As a film major you will be presented with opportunities to work in the production of your own projects, other student or faculty projects, projects for other classes and even professional projects that will shoot in town. You are encouraged you to take advantage of every opportunity to practice and hone your art and craft but not at the expense of your work in this class. Participation in any production outside of this class is not an excuse for failing to complete any and all responsibilities established in this course.

**Academic Misconduct**—Academic integrity is a legitimate concern for every member of the campus community; all share in upholding the fundamental values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness, responsibility and professionalism. By choosing to join the UNLV community, students accept the expectations of the Student Academic Misconduct Policy and are encouraged when faced with choices to always take the ethical path. Students enrolling in UNLV assume the obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with UNLV's function as an educational institution.

An example of academic misconduct is plagiarism. Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of another, from the Internet or any source, without proper citation of the sources. See the *Student Academic Misconduct Policy* (approved December 9, 2005) located at: <https://www.unlv.edu/studentconduct/student-conduct>.

**Copyright**—The University requires all members of the University Community to familiarize themselves **with** and to follow copyright and fair use requirements. **You are**

**individually and solely responsible for violations of copyright and fair use laws. The university will neither protect nor defend you nor assume any responsibility for employee or student violations of fair use laws.** Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability, as well as disciplinary action under University policies. Additional information can be found at: <http://www.unlv.edu/provost/copyright>.

**Disability Resource Center (DRC)**—The UNLV Disability Resource Center (SSC-A 143, <http://drc.unlv.edu/>, 702-895-0866) provides resources for students with disabilities. If you feel that you have a disability, please make an appointment with a Disabilities Specialist at the DRC to discuss what options may be available to you. If you are registered with the UNLV Disability Resource Center, bring your Academic Accommodation Plan from the DRC to the instructor during office hours so that you may work together to develop strategies for implementing the accommodations to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. Any information you provide is private and will be treated as such. To maintain the confidentiality of your request, please do not approach the instructor in front of others to discuss your accommodation needs.

**Religious Holidays Policy**—Any student missing class quizzes, examinations, or any other class or lab work because of observance of religious holidays shall be given an opportunity during that semester to make up missed work. The make-up will apply to the religious holiday absence only. It shall be the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor **within** the first 14 calendar days of the course for fall and spring courses (excepting modular courses), or **within** the first 7 calendar days of the course for summer and modular courses, of his or her intention to participate in religious holidays which do not fall on state holidays or periods of class recess. For additional information, please visit: <http://catalog.unlv.edu/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=531>.

**Transparency in Learning and Teaching**—The University encourages application of the transparency method of constructing assignments for student success. Please see these two links for further information:

<https://www.unlv.edu/provost/teachingandlearning>

<https://www.unlv.edu/provost/transparency>

**Incomplete Grades**—The grade of I—Incomplete—can be granted when a student has satisfactorily completed three-fourths of course work for that semester/session but for reason(s) beyond the student's control, and acceptable to the instructor, cannot complete the last part of the course, and the instructor believes that the student can finish the course without repeating it. The incomplete work must be made up before the end of the following regular semester for undergraduate courses. Graduate students receiving "I" grades in 500-, 600-, or 700-level courses have up to one calendar year to complete the work, at the discretion of the instructor. If course requirements are not completed within the time indicated, a grade of F will be recorded and the GPA will be adjusted accordingly.

Students who are fulfilling an Incomplete do not register for the course but make individual arrangements with the instructor who assigned the I grade.

**Library Resources** -- Students may consult with a librarian on research needs. For this class, the subject librarian is [https://www.library.unlv.edu/contact/librarians\\_by\\_subject](https://www.library.unlv.edu/contact/librarians_by_subject). UNLV Libraries provides resources to support students' access to information. Discovery, access, and use of information are vital skills for academic work and for successful post-college life. Access library resources and ask questions at <https://www.library.unlv.edu/>.

**Tutoring and Coaching**—The Academic Success Center (ASC) provides tutoring, academic success coaching and other academic assistance for all UNLV undergraduate students. For information regarding tutoring subjects, tutoring times, and other ASC programs and services, visit <http://www.unlv.edu/asc> or call [702-895-3177](tel:702-895-3177). The ASC building is located across from the Student Services Complex (SSC). Academic success coaching is located on the second floor of the SSC (ASC Coaching Spot). Drop-in tutoring is located on the second floor of the Lied Library and College of Engineering TEB second floor.

**UNLV Writing Center**—One-on-one or small group assistance with writing is available free of charge to UNLV students at the Writing Center, located in CDC-3-301. Although walk-in consultations are sometimes available, students with appointments will receive priority assistance. Appointments may be made in person or by calling 702-895-3908. The student's Rebel ID Card, a copy of the assignment (if possible), and two copies of any writing to be reviewed are requested for the consultation. More information can be found at: <http://writingcenter.unlv.edu/>.

**Rebelmail**—By policy, faculty and staff should e-mail students' Rebelmail accounts only. Rebelmail is UNLV's official e-mail system for students. It is one of the primary ways students receive official university communication such as information about deadlines, major campus events, and announcements. All UNLV students receive a Rebelmail account after they have been admitted to the university. Students' e-mail prefixes are listed on class rosters. The suffix is always [@unlv.nevada.edu](mailto:@unlv.nevada.edu). **Emailing within WebCampus is acceptable.**

**Final Examinations**—The University requires that final exams given at the end of a course occur at the time and on the day specified in the final exam schedule. See the schedule at: <http://www.unlv.edu/registrar/calendars>.