

ENGL 4350—001 Novel into Film

Instructor: Dr. P. Ingram

Office 410 Carlisle

Office Hours: T/R: 1-2 and by appointment

Classroom: PH 207

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Semester: Spring 2010

Class Time: 11:00 - 12:20

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course we will examine the process of film adaptation. Audiences tend to view films as lesser versions of their literary source texts. We frequently complain about the kinds of license that directors and screenwriters take when they cut out characters and scenes, change endings or even alter the race or gender of the protagonist. Recently, scholars of adaptation have encouraged viewers to see adapted films not as faithless copies of a sacred original, but rather as originals in their own right. If we proceed from the assumption that literature and film are different mediums, then we must acknowledge that what inspires, excites, and moves an audience in one genre is likely to change in the other. This seems especially true when the source text is a graphic novel, *Watchmen*, or a children's story, *Where the Wild Things Are*. In this course we will examine the challenges and opportunities that source texts present to the makers and viewers of films. We will discuss ideas of fidelity, intertextuality, genre, and translation (of period, place, and culture) in the process of adaptation and examine a number of text/film couplings.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course you will have:

- learned what is at stake in the process of adaptation and how to assess a film in relation to its source text and independently of it.
- become an accomplished reader of texts, understanding how genre affects the narrative process.
- developed a capacity to undertake critical analyses of literature and film.

REQUIRED TEXTS

The textbooks are available at the bookstore. I expect you to bring the appropriate text to each class. If you cannot find the text at one of the local bookstores you should buy it from an online vendor, such as Amazon or Barnes and Noble. **Everybody MUST have their books by week 2 of class. Failure to bring the appropriate text to class may result in an absence.**

Textbook

Desmond & Hawkes, *Adaptation: Studying Film and Literature*. McGraw Hill, 2006

Novels

High Fidelity (Nick Hornby)

Emma (Jane Austen)

The Orchid Thief (Susan Orlean)

Mrs. Dalloway (V. Woolf)

The Hours (Michael Cunningham)

Where the Wild Things Are (M. Sendak)
Watchmen (Moore/Gibbons)

Films (in order they are to be viewed)

These are to be watched outside of class. All films are available through Netflix or Blockbuster or another movie rental company of your choice. Some can be viewed on You Tube or through other free movie sites.

High Fidelity. Dir. Stephen Frears (2000).
Clueless. Dir. Amy Heckerling (1995)
Adaptation. Dir. Spike Jonze (2002)
The Hours. Dir. Stephen Daldry (2002)
Where the Wild Things Are. Dir. Spike Jonze (2010)
Watchmen. Dir. Zack Snyder (2009)

Your Grade: This course requires active and consistent participation from all members of the class. The breakdown of your final grade is as follows.

- Active class participation **10%**
- Adaptation Analysis (2 pages, 6 of these) **30%**
- Midterm Exam **20% on 3/10**
- Group Presentation **15%**
- Research Paper (10-15 pages) **25% Due 5/3**

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Class Participation

Active and consistent class participation is an essential part of this course. I expect you to come to class prepared to discuss the material, to answer questions, and to ask questions. If you do not participate you will receive 0 for participation. **Attendance in itself is not participation.**

Adaptation Analysis

There are two ways to approach this assignment; you may pick either approach, but don't try to do both in the one paper.

- 1) Follow guidelines in Desmond and Hawkes, pp. 50-51. Please note that you can pick any chapter (but only one) from the source text to compare, not just the first one. **OR**
- 2) Take an episode or scene from the novel that was dropped from the film adaptation, and explain why you think the scene was not shot and why you think it should be included and how its inclusion would alter the film's narrative.

Points to keep in mind when writing your analysis

- This is a formal piece of writing. It is **NOT a journal or diary entry. Do not** just explain why you do or don't like the film.
- Be sure to use the appropriate film and literary terms in your paper. See Desmond and Hawkes, chs. 2&3.

- You are required to write an analysis for every film (six in total).
- **These should be two pages long, typed in Times New Roman 12pt. font, and double-spaced.**
- They will be collected on the day they are due.
- **No late papers, except in the case of documented illness, will be accepted.** If you cannot make it to class you should email your response paper to me **before** class.

Midterm Format TBA

Group Presentation

Each of you will sign up for a presentation on one of the six films or, if you so choose, on one novel, Cunningham's *The Hours*. In your presentation, you and your classmates will undertake an analysis of the adaptation.

- The presentation is an extension of the work done in the adaptation analysis paper. And you should follow those guidelines.
- In the presentation, however, each of you will pick a different scene to examine and present to the class. Remember to use the terminology and criteria for analysis discussed in our readings.
- You may use your adaptation analysis paper as a guideline for your presentation, but you will need to go into more detail than in your paper. **DO NOT READ YOUR PAPER!!**
- Each presenter will get ten minutes to present. You will be graded individually, but you do need to work together. For example: You will need to discuss who is doing what scene and how the scenes work together to render the narrative adaptation. What is the overall effect of scenes being added or cut, etc.?
- **It is VITAL that you have your film clips queued and ready to go. Make a list of the chapter and scenes of your clips so that you can refer to them easily. I will not be impressed if you spend half of your presentation looking for a scene.**
- If you are in the group presenting on Cunningham's novel you can still follow the guidelines above, but in this case you will be comparing the novel's adaptation of its source text.

Research Paper (10-15 pages)

Pick one topic:

- 1) Find a different film adaptation of one of the source texts we have read in the class and discuss its relationship to the source text. You should also consider how it is similar or different to the film adaptation we studied. You should discuss the specific choices in direction, editing, and writing of each production and the difference those choices make.
- 2) Choose a source text and film adaptation not discussed in class and undertake an analysis of it. Possible choices: a) Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*/Coppola,

Apocalypse Now; b) Shelley, *Frankenstein*/Branagh, *Frankenstein* or Brooks, *Young Frankenstein*; c) Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*/ Scott, *Bladerunner*; d) Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*/ Luhrmann, *Romeo and Juliet*; e) Carroll *Alice in Wonderland*/ Burton, *Alice in Wonderland*. **You must clear your choice of texts with me first.**

- 3) Research and examine the history and controversy over the adaptation of *Watchmen* to film. You will need to research material in fanzines and blogs, since the novel's publication in 1986. You should then analyze the recent film in relation to these concerns, examining the validity of the concerns in light of the film's production. You should consider what role the text's genre—graphic novel played in this controversy. (If you want to do this topic, start early as you might have to contact publishers for copies of articles, etc.)

General Policies

Attendance:

I will take roll every day. During the semester you are permitted **FOUR** absences. I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences, so use your time wisely. Doctor's visits, surgeries, meetings with advisors, sports trips, etc all will be taken from your absence total. You do not need to provide me with documentation for your absence.

Each absence after the fourth one will result in a 2 point penalty off your final grade. Only in exceptional cases will I accept documentation excusing you after the fourth absence. If you are absent from class you are responsible for getting notes from a classmate, completing the work you have missed, and for being on schedule when you return. **If you are sick for the day of your group presentation you MUST CONTACT YOUR GROUP MEMBERS AND ME BEFORE THE CLASS BEGINS.** Failure to do so will result in a zero for that assignment.

Tardiness:

You must arrive to class on time. Tardiness to class may result in your being counted as absent.

Classroom/email etiquette:

I expect each member of the class to behave respectfully towards each other and towards me. Some of you may find the material we will discuss in class to be controversial, but not everyone will share your opinion. Please be mindful of this fact during discussions and in email correspondence.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged borrowing of another person's work and passing it off as your own. *It includes direct lifting of another's words or ideas as well as PARAPHRASING another's words or ideas.* Please complete the online tutorial offered by the library: <<[<library.uta.edu/tutorials/Plagiarism.>](http://library.uta.edu/tutorials/Plagiarism.)>> This tutorial will teach you when you need to cite a source and how to do it correctly. Plagiarism is a serious offense and carries serious consequences, including failure and/or expulsion from the University.

Faculty members are required to report incidences of plagiarism and cheating to Student Judicial Affairs.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

Students who need accommodations are asked to arrange a meeting during office hours the first week of classes, or earlier if accommodations are needed immediately. Please bring a copy of all relevant paperwork to the meeting. If you do not have a notification for accommodations but need accommodations, make an appointment with the Office of Students with Disabilities, 102 University Hall, 2-3364.

Student Support Services Available: The University of Texas at Arlington has established a variety of programs to help students meet the challenges of college life. Support to students includes advising, counseling, mentoring, tutoring, supplemental instruction, and writing assistance. For a complete list of academic support services, visit the Academic Assistance resource page of the Office of Student Success Programs, www.uta.edu/uac/studentsuccess/academic-assistance. To help students address personal, academic and career concerns, individual counseling is also available. For more information, students are encouraged to contact Counseling Services www.counseling.uta.edu at (817) 272-3671 or visit a counselor in 216 Davis Hall.

Electronic Communication Policy: The University of Texas at Arlington has adopted the University “MavMail” address as the sole official means of communication with students. MavMail is used to remind students of important deadlines, advertise events and activities, and permit the University to conduct official transactions exclusively by electronic means. For example, important information concerning registration, financial aid, payment of bills, and graduation are now sent to students through the MavMail system. All students are assigned a MavMail account. ***Students are responsible for checking their MavMail regularly.*** Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/email/>. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, and it remains active even after they graduate from UT Arlington.

Tentative Assignment Schedule (subject to change)

Readings/viewings are due on the date recorded and should therefore be completed BEFORE the corresponding class day. Though we might devote more than one class period to discussion of a particular text you should COMPLETE the reading by the date noted below. Assignments may change at my discretion.

| DATE | CLASS DISCUSSION/ READINGS DUE |
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| Week 1 T 1/18 | Introduction to the class |
| R 1/20 | Stam, “Introduction: The Theory and Practice of Adaptation” pdf. |
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| Week 2 T 1/25 | Hornby, <i>High Fidelity</i> (novel) pp. 3-164 |
| R 1/27 | <i>High Fidelity</i> cont. pp. 165- end |

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| Week 3 T 2/1 | Desmond & Hawkes chs. 2,3 & 5 |
| R 2/3 | <i>High Fidelity</i> (movie) Group Presentation Adaptation Analysis Due |
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| Week 4 T 2/8 | Austen, <i>Emma</i> chs. 1-19, pp. 1-101 |
| R 2/10 | <i>Emma</i> chs. 19-36, pp. 101-205 |
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| Week 5 T 2/15 | <i>Emma</i> chs. 36-end, pp. 205-328 |
| R 2/17 | <i>Clueless</i> (movie) Group Presentation Adaptation Analysis Due |
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| Week 6 T 2/22 | Orlean, <i>The Orchid Thief</i> pp.3-152 |
| R 2/24 | <i>The Orchid Thief</i> pp. 153-end |
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| Week 7 T 3/1 | <i>Adaptation</i> (movie) Group Presentation Adaptation Analysis Due |
| R 3/3 | Harner, "Adaptation, The Orchid Thief..." pdf. |

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| Week 8 T 3/8 | Midterm Review |
| R 3/10 | ***Midterm Exam*** |
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| Week 9 T 3/15 | <i>Spring break</i> |
| R 3/17 | <i>Spring break</i> |
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| Week 10 T 3/22 | Woolf, <i>Mrs. Dalloway</i> pp.1-100 |
| R 3/24 | <i>Mrs. Dalloway</i> pp.100- 194 |
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| Week 11 T 3/29 | Cunningham, <i>The Hours</i> (novel) |
| R 3/31 | <i>The Hours</i> novel discussion continued Group Presentation on the novel |
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| Week 12 T 4/5 | <i>The Hours</i> (movie) Group Presentation on movie Adaptation Analysis due |
| R 4/7 | Brooker, “Postmodern adaptation: pastiche, intertextuality and re-functioning” pdf. |
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| Week 13 T 4/12 | Sendak, <i>Where the Wild Things Are</i> (story) Fasick, “Weston Woods Films as Interpretations of Literature.” pdf |
| R 4/14 | Shaddock, “Where the Wild Things Are: Sendak’s Journey into the Heart of Darkness” pdf. |
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| Week 14 T 4/19 | <i>Where the Wild Things Are</i> (movie) Group Presentation Adaptation Analysis Due |
| R 4/21 | <i>Watchmen</i> (graphic novel) |
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| Week 15 T 4/26 | <i>Watchmen</i> novel discussion continued. Guest lecturer, Dr. Cedrick May. |
| R 4/28 | Research Day—No class |
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| Week 16 T 5/3 | Research Paper Due |
| R 5/5 | <i>Watchmen</i> (movie) Group Presentation Adaptation Analysis Due |