

English 434.001 (81021), Literature and Film

Professor Gerald Duchovnay, Fall 2014

Office: Hall of Languages 326 Office Hours: TR 10-11, 12:15-1:45

Other times by email or via appointment

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Course Description: English 434, Literature and Film, which satisfies the Visual and Performing Arts requirement of the University Studies core, examines the interaction of film, literature, and other texts, and their interactions. During the semester we will consider what happens when a variety of texts are made into films; if we approach film and literary and other texts differently; and how we view and read these texts. We will also consider the cultures out of which the texts come: Does it make a difference if a text was composed in 1789 or 1934 or 2010 and filmed in 2013.

This course will be useful to anyone who has an interest in learning more about films, literature, and other texts in general; screenwriting and how the written word is translated to the screen; how the written word or visual texts in another language are translated (in print or other text form, then to the screen); and cultural and historical aspects of adaptation. The course may also be of interest to those who might use film or multi-media in a work environment such as teaching or production, those who may have an interest in directing, photography, cinematography, illustration, acting, computer graphics, and the like, or those who have an interest in literature, film, history, and culture.

No background in film studies is needed for this course. You will, however, be asked to look at and think about films more reflectively than you may have in the past. We will read about and view the films from a variety of perspectives; your responses to these texts and close viewing and reading of the texts will be important components of this class. *We will not be making films in this course.*

Films or clips to be shown, especially in the second half of the course, will be determined in part by interests of those enrolled based on a particular topic that will allow us to look at adaptations of certain kinds of films in some depth. Be aware that some contemporary films are not rated G, or PG-13; ***if your values do not permit you to view films that may have some violence, obscene language, occasional nudity, or vivid images from our or other cultures, this course may not be for you and you may want to choose a different course.***

My presentations will involve some lecturing, but primarily we will discuss what you are reading and seeing. Our primary text for this course is *Understanding Movies*, thirteenth edition, a text used on campuses nationwide. As the title of the book suggests, its purpose is to increase your understanding of looking at and "reading" movies. There are many more names and terms than you can reasonably expect to internalize during one semester. As we progress through the course, I will give you a list of names and terms for you to know. They will be the basis for the identifications in the exams; they will also serve as a solid foundation for the understanding of film. Don't be overwhelmed by the readings, but keep up with them. Also, familiarize yourself with the layout of the text, the glossary, bibliographies, index, and illustrations. These "extras" are valuable aids to what we will be studying. There will be additional readings based on the film(s) you choose for your project(s) and handouts or downloads of material.

If things go according to schedule, we will have the opportunity to see 12-14 filmed texts and some clips and shorts from many more films. You are welcome and encouraged to see as many films as you can on your own. In addition to our discussions, you will have an opportunity to explore one aspect of adaptation in your first short paper and then some other aspect of film and literary studies in the second paper.

Course Objectives:

- 1) To become familiar with the difference between film and literary texts;
- 2) to become familiar with ways of "reading" films;
- 3) to become more skilled in discussing and evaluating movie and literary texts;
- 4) to develop greater skills in visual literacy;
- 5) to exam film as a reflection of cultures and periods of history;
- 6) to increase your knowledge of film techniques and the grammar of film.

7) to become familiar with some significant filmed texts.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the elements involved in adapting texts to film;
2. Students will demonstrate analytical skills in visual literacy and reading filmed texts;
3. Students will demonstrate a familiarity with ways of discussing and evaluating films as reflections of cultures and source texts;
4. Students will participate in a “community” interested in discussing/analyzing films beyond the surface level of narrative or character.

Textbooks: Giannetti, Louis. *Understanding Movies*. 13th edition. Boston: Allyn and Bacon/Pearson, 2014.
ISBN: 978-0-205-73754-3

Handouts

Some movies available through the Media Center in the Gee Library.

Books or handouts at Reserve Desk in the Gee Library or downloaded – as needed

Evaluations: Grades will be determined by two examinations, two short papers, short written responses to films, class participation, and most likely one oral presentations and one abstract. (Oral presentations will depend on class size and timing.) This is a tentative breakdown because what we will/can do will be determined in part by technology, how many are enrolled in the class, and if the orals/abstracts fall into place. A possible breakdown is as follows:

Exam 1=15% Paper 1 =15% Written Responses to Films=20%
Exam 2=15% Paper 2 =20% Class Participation=5% Oral/Abstract=10%

Examination Policy: The mid-term and final exams are listed on the schedule. The date of the final is firmly established by the university. It will be on Tuesday, December 10. In-class tests will consist of objective, short answer and essay questions.

Make-up Exams: Except for extraordinary circumstances, make-up examinations--which I dislike and which will offer less options and thus tend to be a bit more difficult--will be given only once, at a time and place to be announced.

Final Examination: The final examination will consist of questions that focus on the materials of the last half of the term (similar in format to the first exam) and a cumulative question that asks you to bring together materials from the entire course.

Attendance: I cannot urge you strongly enough to attend all classes. Without being in class you lose the benefit of participating or listening to responses to the films. Class absences will have a negative effect on the evaluation of classroom participation. Absences will be noted by the instructor; absences in excess of three will contribute to the lowering of your grade. Six absences--unless for extraordinary circumstances and appropriate notification to your instructor--will result in your being dropped from the class. Those who are dropped from class without having attended regularly and who are on financial aid may be required to repay their financial aid. All instructors would prefer that students reflect a professional attitude toward the work of the class and attendance. If you find yourself in a situation that prevents you from attending class, especially **if you have to miss a few classes in a row, it is IMPERATIVE that you notify me about your situation.** If I do not hear from you and you have six absences, especially if you are a no-show for a week or two at a time, I will initiate the process to drop you from the class, or you will receive an “F” in the class if it is past the drop deadline.

We meet only twice a week, and material shown in class will not be re-shown in class. You might find some of these films on cable or via Netflix. It will be your responsibility to view the films you miss. The Media Center on campus (second floor Ag/IT Building, Room 212) may have copies of some of the material for you to view there. However, do not expect or anticipate if you have missed a film and that it is not available that your instructor will be able to show it to you at some other time or provide you with a copy to view. You are responsible for seeing all the material shown in class. Time permitting, I encourage you to view a film more than once on your own. Films, like other "texts" such as books, paintings are worth multiple viewings. On a rare occasion it is possible that class may run a bit longer than scheduled in order for us to complete a film

or the end of a discussion, but I will try to get you out on time. If you have a problem with attendance policy or the long days, please let me know in the first week of classes. I will try to end by 4:20 each day.

Common Decency: All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. In addition, you are requested to turn off your cell phones, ipads, and other forms of technology before entering the classroom. Common courtesy says you do not receive or answer calls during class. ***And no text messaging in class.*** I, too, will turn off my cell phone. If you are expecting an emergency call, please let me know ahead of time, put your phone on vibrator mode, and sit close to the exit so you can leave discreetly to take the call.

Restrooms in the Hall of Languages are on the first and third floors. You do not need to ask your instructor for permission to leave to use the restroom.

Students with Disabilities: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact: **Office of Student Disability Resources and Services / Texas A&M University-Commerce/ Gee Library, Room 132 / Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835 Fax (903) 468-8148**
StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

Papers: These assignments will be worked out with me. One paper, the first, will focus specifically on the issue of adaptation. You will be asked to choose one movie based on some form of adaptation--literary or otherwise. You will want to make sure you have access to the source material and the filmed adaptation of the text, see the movie outside of class, and do a paper and, possibly, an oral presentation on some aspect of adaptation that relates to that film. **The key concept here is to remember that you are not really doing a paper on the entire film.** You are focusing on maybe two or three minutes of film, or how aspects are presented in the film, to discuss aspects of the adaptation process. We will talk about the second paper and I will provide you with a list of possible films for that paper. Approaches you might consider in dealing with aspects of adaptation that Giannetti talks about in his book, include: how acting impacts characterization; how set design reflects theme; literary vs film censorship as applied to one film/text or the ratings system as applied to the filmed version of a text; ideology and literature and film; or, aspects of color or of photography in film. These are general areas for exploration, but will need to be narrowed down as you proceed to develop a thesis.

Format: The first paper will be 5-7 pages, double-spaced, computer printed, plus documentation as needed. The first paper needs to be a close reading of the text and film; this paper does not require you to go to outside sources, but you may if you so choose. You will need to submit two copies of the finished paper. The second paper will be 6-8 pages, plus documentation. More on these assignments as we progress in the course. All presentations will require some form of visuals to enhance the presentation.

Academic Honesty Statement: Instructors in the Department of Literature and Languages do not tolerate plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. Instructors uphold and support the highest academic standards, and students are expected to do likewise. Penalties for students guilty of academic dishonesty include disciplinary probation, suspension, and expulsion. (Texas A&M University-Commerce Code of Student Conduct 5.b[1,2,3])

Plagiarism: Our word plagiarism is derived from a word that means "to kidnap." Plagiarism is a form of kidnapping someone else's ideas, opinions, arguments, or research, and presenting them (it) as your own. Plagiarism "includes (but is not limited to) failure to indicate the source with quotation marks or footnotes where appropriate if any of the following are reproduced in the work submitted: 1. A phrase, written or musical; 2. A graphic element; 3. A proof; 4. Specific language; 5. An idea derived from the work, published or unpublished, of another person" or group; 6. material "borrowed" from the internet without attribution.

Much of the confusion and unintentional dishonesty in undergraduate papers results from ignorance or carelessness with regard to attribution of sources. When you borrow from what others have said, you are obligated to acknowledge your sources. We all solicit opinions about our writing from family, friends, or

colleagues. Your indebtedness to others for sharing ideas with you about your paper or for reading and commenting on it can be indicated in an acknowledgements page accompanying each formal assignment. If you go beyond conversations with friends or colleagues to other outside sources, you need to acknowledge these sources in your paper and in a Works Cited page. If you are uncertain about your documentation, please see your instructor before you submit your paper. Intentional plagiarism will result in a zero for the work and appropriate disciplinary action.

Film Responses: I suggest that you keep a notebook or folder with responses to the films. The purpose of these responses is to get you to record on paper your initial observations and reactions about the film, a brief summary, and factual details (director, actors, year of release, etc.). In addition, this information should assist you when reviewing for exams.

Teacher Certification:

Students who plan to teach English, Spanish, or English as a Second Language in Texas public schools must pass the appropriate state certification tests. *There may be advisors available to you regarding these exams. If so, you should contact the appropriate advisor for the exam you are taking by the beginning of your junior year, if not sooner.*

Schedule: This schedule is tentative and subject to change. **The films and clips listed are only possibilities to give you a sense of what we might be viewing.** Because of bad weather, technological snafus, campus events (speakers, banned book week, etc.) that might link to what we are doing, and a variety of other unexpected happenings, please be flexible. I will try to stay as close to the schedule as possible regarding your exams, readings, and paper due dates, but there most likely will be changes related to the actual films or clips, especially with regard to film choices and the films for the second half of the course.

Key Dates: First set of orals – October 7 & 9

First paper and abstract to be submitted (two copies) – Oct. 11 (can submit earlier)

Mid-term examination--October 16

Second set of orals – Dec. 2 & 4

Second paper due (two copies) – Dec. 2

Final Examination, Tuesday, Dec. 9, 1:15-4:00 p.m.

Week 1 (Aug 26 & Aug 28)

Info Sheet + Course Syllabus + Pre-Assessment

Looking at Film/Reading Film

*Hills Like White Elephants
or clip*

Assignment for Thursday:

For Next Time, Read: The Course Syllabus, plus "Stage to Lordsburg"

<<http://thenostalgialeague.com/olmag/haycox.html>>

or on reserve in *Adaptations* (text) on Duchovnay's reserve list

For Next Time: Read: Giannetti, pp. 398-403 on Literary Adaptations

Giannetti, Chapter 8, Story, pp. 327--342

Aug 28 Discussion of Syllabus/Course Elements of Fiction

Discussion/Response to "Stage to Lordsburg" & *Stagecoach*

Looking at Filmed Fiction or *Hills Like White Elephants*

Stagecoach/Hills Like White Elephants

For Next Time, Read: Giannetti, Story, pp. 342--367

Read: "It Had to be Murder" <<http://www.mietecast.com/woolrich.pdf>>

Week 2 (Sept. 2 & Sept. 4)

Discussion: Elements of Fiction/Elements of Film

Handout: Paper/Orals

For Next Time, Read: Giannetti, Chapter 9, Writing, 368-382

Read: "It Had to be Murder" < <http://www.mietecast.com/woolrich.pdf>> or in

Adaptations (on reserve), pp. 67-94.

Sept. 4 Film & Literature Analysis

Discussion of Paper/Giannetti

Rear Window

List of Terms, Unit 1 (Giannetti) + other docs

	For Next Time, Read: Giannetti, Chapter 9, Writing, 382-403	
Week 3 (Sept.9 & Sept. 11)	Discussion: Rear Window-Film & Literature	
	For Next Time, Read: Giannetti, Chapter 1, "Photography," 1-23	
Sept. 11 – Dickens and Filmmaking		<i>Adaptation or The Searchers or Unforgiven</i>
	For Next Time, Read: Giannetti, Photography, 23-46	
Week 4 (Sept. 16 & 18)		
Sept. 16 – Discussion: Adaptation or Genre Cycle		Anatomy of a Scene: <i>The Cooler</i>
	Aspects of Filmmaking & Story Telling – Point of View	
	For Next Time, Read: Giannetti, Chapter 2, <i>Mise en Scène</i> , 46--67	
Sept. 18 – Adapting Non-Fiction		TBA
	For Next Time, Read: Giannetti, Chapter 2, <i>Mise en Scène</i> , 67-94	
Week 5 (Sept 23 & Sept. 25)		
Sept. 23--Discussion		
	Read for Next Time: TBA	
Sept. 25-- Another Way of Looking?		TBA
	For Next Time, Read: Chapter 6, "Acting," 232-265	
Week 6 (Sept 30 & Oct 2)		
Sept 30- Discussion of Acting+ Screenplays		
	Sample Papers/Discussion / Orals Preparation	
	For Next Time, Read: Giannetti, Chapter 6, "Acting," 265-283	
Oct. 2 – Acting, Screenwriting, and Power		
Week 7 (Oct. 7 & Oct. 9)		
Oral Presentations 2-4:15		oral presentations
Oct. 9 More presentations		oral presentations
	Exam Study Questions	
	For Next Time, Film, TBA	
Week 8 (Oct. 14 & Oct. 16)		
Oct 14-	Film/Prep for Exam	TBA
Oct 16 --	Mid Term Examination	
	Read for Next Time: Chapter 3, Giannetti, " Movement," 95-134	
Wk 9 Oct 21 & Oct. 23)		
Oct. 21 Course Direction		<i>3 Days of the Condor</i>
	Genre Adaptations	
	Handouts: Unit 2, Terms/Paper 2 Discussion/How to Find Sources	
	For Next Time, Read: Giannetti, Chapter 11, Critique, 447-486	
Oct. 23 Discussion: <i>3 Days of the Condor</i>		TBA
	Exams/Papers Discussion +	
	For Next Time, Read: Giannetti, Chapter 4, "Editing," 135-161	
Week 10 (Oct 28 & Oct. 30)		
Oct. 28 Discussion		
	Ways in to Film: Film Analysis (<i>Juno</i>), images	
	Assignment: Chapter 4, "Editing," 162-192	
Oct. 30 Film Noir/ Neo-Noir / Ambiguity/Film Genre vs Style		TBA
	Assignment: Responses to movie shown	
	: Read for next time, Giannetti, Chapter 5, Sound, 193-205	
	: Google Paul Schrader and Film Noir (essay/def of noir)	
Week 11 (Nov. 4 & Nov. 6)		
Nov. 4 Discussion		
	Types of Adaptations – Discussion	
	For Next Time, Read: Giannetti, Chapter 5, Sound, 205-231	TBA
	Handouts: Info on Paper 2/Orals; Ideology	
Nov. 6 Conspiracy		TBA
	For Next Time, Read: Giannetti, Chapter 10, Ideology, 404-448	

Week 12 (Nov. 11 & 13)

Nov. 11--Discussion--

For Next Time, Read: Giannetti, *Dramatization*, 284-326

TBA

Nov. 13--Ideology and Film

For Next Time, Giannetti, "Critique," 449-471

TBA

Week 13 (Nov. 18 & Nov. 20)

Discussion

Nov. 20 Docudrama/Adaptation/Documentary

TBA

Handouts: Paraphrasing

For next class: Giannetti, *Critique*, 472-488.

Week 14 (Nov. 25 & Nov 27)

Film, Politics, History, and Culture

TBA

Nov. 27 Thanksgiving--no class

Week 15 (Dec. 2 & Dec. 4

Dec. 2-- All Papers Due, 2 Copies Due; All abstracts (2 copies) due

Oral Presentations/Abstracts

Course Evaluations on line

Dec. 4--Oral Presentations / Possible Exam Questions for Final

Week 16 -- Dec. 9--- Final Examination, 1:15-4:00 pm, HL 203