

English 620, Adaptations to Film

Gerald Duchovnay Fall 2015, Tuesdays, 4:30-7:10, HL 203

Office: Hall of Languages 326

Office Hours: TH, 10-11, 12:15-1:45; T, 4:30-5:00. Other times by appointment.

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Course Description:

English 620, Adaptations to Film, is an examination of the relationship between film and literature and other "texts." We will examine various approaches to film analysis for the literature and film classroom and for "general consumption," as we consider how different types of texts are presented in filmed narratives, and how various social and cultural readings are applied to these texts. This course is suitable for anyone who might use film in the classroom, teaches literature and/or film, wants an introduction on to how to read film, or is interested in studying aspects of visual literacy.

This course will involve collaboration; it will also require you to be flexible, since we are dealing not only with our colleagues, but technology as well. I anticipate you will have a good experience, but if this is your first film course, it may be a bit different from others you have taken because of the subject matter and the opportunity for the class to choose some of the texts, or segments of the texts we will see and discuss.

While I anticipate this will be a "fun course," you will have a substantial amount of work. In addition to the texts, there will be various readings of articles, journals, books, and film texts that will be the source for presentations and discussions. There will also be a book review, responses to the readings or films, an annotated bibliography based on your final project, and an essay suitable for a conference paper or scholarly article. These items should prepare you for a variety of things, including how to do film research, how to get yourself published (book review, conference paper or article), and how to do bibliographical research related to adaptations. This course is one of the requirements for a film certificate.

The readings will include texts that deal with the history of adaptation and theoretical and practical matters. The films will combine some of my selections and some of yours.

Textbooks:

Cheshire, Ellen. *Bio-pics: A Life in Pictures*. London and New York: Wallflower, 2014. ISBN: 9780231172059.

Film and Literature: An Introduction and Reader. Ed. Timothy Corrigan. 2nd ed. London and New York: Routledge, 2012. Paper. ISBN: 978041556010.

The Pedagogy of Adaptation. Ed. Dennis Cutchins, Laurence Raw, and James M. Welsh. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2010. Paper ISBN 978-0-8108-7296-7.

Items on reserve at Gee Library and handouts

Additional Recommended Sources:

The Cambridge Companion to Literature on the Screen. Ed Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan. Cambridge, U.K. and New York: Cambridge UP, 2007. Paper

Adaptation, a special issue of *Post Script: Essays in Film and the Humanities* (Vol. 23, No. 3, Summer 2004, available from instructor or bound in library or via data bases)

Duchovnay, Gerald. *Film Voices: Interviews from Post Script*. Albany: SUNY P, 2004.

Field, Syd. *Going to the Movies: A Personal Journey Through Four Decades of Modern Film*. New York: Dell, 2001.

Giannetti, Louis. *Understanding Movies*. 13th ed. Boston: Pearsaon (any of the last five editions will convey the key aspects)

Hayward, Susan. *Cinema: The Key Concepts*, 3rd ed. New York: Routledge, 2006.

Monaco, James. *How to Read a Film: Movies, Media, Multimedia*. 4th Ed. New York: Oxford UP, 2009.

Oxford Guide to Film Studies. Ed. John Hill and Pamela Church Gibson. Oxford & New York: Oxford UP, 1998.

Stam, Robert and Alessandra Raengo. *Literature and Film: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Film Adaptation*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005.

Movies: In addition to the books for the course, you will probably need to buy one or two movies for your work. Media Services in the Gee Library has some movies on DVD and can be searched via the library

catalog. I recommend, that you purchase a copy of the movie(s) you are working on. Some are special editions with useful “extras.” The film is considered your “primary text,” and as such you will want to own a copy of it. It will also make it easier should you wish to show clips during your presentation.

Library Reserve: There are numerous key books on adaptation on reserve under my name and English 620 (and also English 434). The books are there for you to use; I hope you do. Also, please obtain the log-in information (passwords, whatever) that will allow you access to the data bases and other materials if you are off campus. For articles not available on our campus, work IN ADVANCE of your deadlines with Interlibrary Loan to get the material (books or articles) that you need.

Course Requirements: Responses to readings, presentations based on readings, one book review, class presentation introducing a filmed adaptation, mid-term examination, annotated bibliography based on final paper, final paper, abstract of final paper.

You will be asked to choose one filmed bio-pic that is available on DVD and that you think you might teach in a class or would like to teach, or would like to study in depth. You might look at a filmed feature version (not documentary) of, say, *Frost/Nixon* or *Ray* or *Walk the Line*, or *Lincoln* or *The Queen* or *Capote*. You will want to make sure early on that there is critical material on the text(s) you choose, since research will be a key component of your project. The final project will be an analytical (not “personal”), documented essay that would be suitable for a conference presentation or a scholarly article. If you are uncertain about what to work on or availability, please check with me. Aside from researching your particular film and its source material, there should be enough material on the reserve list or secured through Inter-Library Loan to support your research on your project. This filmed adaptation will serve as your focus for your annotated bibliography and final paper (and abstract, all of which will be shared with your classmates.

Our Discourse Community: Some of the basic terms – the grammar or language of film and literature--that we will talk about you many know and may have internalized. If you are new to the study of film, I will give you a basic list of terms that we will use and you can read about in books or on-line, or pick up from our discussions. It is always dangerous to assume, but I am assuming all of you have a grounding in basic literary terms. Should you need a list of terms and definitions, please ask me for one. Familiarize yourself with the layout of all the texts, including the bibliographies. I believe these assigned texts are highly readable and should be useful to you in any future work or discussions about adaptation.

My presentations will involve a very limited amount of “lecturing”; primarily, we will discuss what you are reading, seeing, and presenting.

Overall Course Objectives:

- To become familiar with different theoretical approaches to filmed adaptations;
- to develop greater skills in visual literacy (“reading films”);
- to become more skilled in discussing and analyzing movie, literary, and other source texts;
- to increase your knowledge of film techniques and the grammar of film;
- to become familiar with some significant filmed adaptations;
- to become familiar with primary and secondary materials related to adaptation studies;
- to apply your understanding of filmed adaptations to written work and oral presentations;
- to participate in a “community” interested in discussing/analyzing films and source texts beyond their surface level.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Learning outcomes are what you are able to do as a result of the activities, readings, instruction, etc. that have occurred in this course -- these are my expectations of you, the learner in this course.

1. You will demonstrate an understanding of the theories related to adaptations to film through written and oral presentations;
2. You will demonstrate skills in visual literacy –reading films –in ways that apply to texts adapted to the screen;

3. You will participate in a “community” interested in discussing/analyzing movies adapted to the screen beyond the surface levels of fidelity, entertainment, narrative, or character;
4. You will complete a final essay that will be suitable for sharing with other professionals at a regional or national conference, or could be developed into a scholarly essay suitable for submission to an academic publication.

Assessment--Examinations and Papers: There will be one formal, mid-term examination. In addition, you will have a number of written assignments. They will include: responses/commentaries on our readings, one review of theoretical text related to the study of filmed adaptations, an annotated bibliography linked to your focused final paper, a final paper, and an abstract of the final paper.

Responses – You are being asked to do two things with regard to some of the selected readings: 1) write two page responses to some of the ideas or questions in selected readings; 2) prepare three talking points--ideas that the author raises that are worth discussing in class--for the reading that you are assigned. On occasion you may lead a discussion of the essay you were assigned for that day. NOTE: It is important that you read all the material and be ready to discuss the ideas presented, even if it is not a reading that was assigned to you for presentation.

Examination – The mid-term examination will be a take-home. The exam will require a synthesizing/analysis of the readings and discussions, with application to filmed texts. While it may change, at present there is no plan for a final examination. Your paper will serve as your final, demonstrating all that you have gained and applied from what we have done in the class.

Book Review --You will be asked to review ONE book from a list provided or a book assigned. A copy of these comments will be distributed to each seminar participant; if time permits, we will discuss each one briefly. These reviews will include a brief overview of the book, several key points made by the author or several authors if a collection of essays, and, to the best of your knowledge where the book fits in to the history of adaptation studies. After the prose review of the book, list three talking points -- ideas that the author raises that are worth discussing in class, time permitting.

Annotated Bibliography – One of the key elements of research is knowing where to look to better prepare you to teach film. Thus, what you are being asked to do is to find “readings” or cognate readings about the particular texts/ideas you are dealing with in your final project and provide a useful, briefly annotated (2-3 sentences) bibliography of reviews, articles, and books related to your study. This will be distributed to everyone in the seminar so that we will all benefit from your explorations. Guidelines: A minimum of ten substantive scholarly sources (books or articles) and three or four substantive reviews (400 words or more) of the film or source material (biography or autobiography) for the bio-pic. A possible side benefit: depending upon whether you are or will be taking English 595 or doing a thesis or dissertation, the preparation of an annotated bibliography should assist you in the future.

Final Paper – You are being asked to submit a 10-12 page essay suitable for a conference presentation, or, if so inclined, an 18-24 page paper that, with some polishing, could be submitted to a scholarly journal. Our focus is something few scholars have addressed, so there is a good possibility that if you do substantive work, you will definitely have material for part of a panel or individual conference presentation. Your final paper might be: 1) a theoretical essay, with concrete examples from the adapted filmed text, related to filmed adaptations; 2) an essay that analyzes a debate or conflict related to some aspect of adaptation and your film; or 3) an essay developing a key idea related to adapted bio-pics and the text(s) you are focusing on for your class presentation. The scope and direction of the project will depend upon your knowledge and experience with the film(s), your research, and your critical approach(es).

Plagiarism/Academic Honesty: 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]).

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.

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.

The Writing Center. The Writing Center is dedicated to helping writers take advantage of all opportunities for learning related to the writing process; to that end, the Center can assist writers at any stage of the writing process. In addition to your instructor, this is the place to go for additional assistance with your reading and writing projects at TAMU-Commerce. The Center can help you with your papers and digital texts for your classes. The Center has two locations: (1) on the ground floor of the Hall of Languages (room 103), and (2) by the circulation desk in Gee Library. To schedule an appointment, come to HL 103 or call (903) 886-5280, or check out the hours at the Gee Library.

Evaluation/Grades: Your grade will be based on your assignments and work in class. Analytical Final Paper=30%; Annotated Bibliography=10%; Exam=15%; Responses to Readings=5%; Class Participation =10%; Book Review=10%; Oral presentations and leading Q&A=15%. As in all graduate courses, the collaborative sharing of ideas and responses will be important throughout the term.

Attendance: Please try 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. I will note your absences; absences in excess of three will contribute to the lowering of your grade. After six absences you will be dropped from the class. If there are truly extraordinary circumstances, it is incumbent upon you to notify me about your situation to see if you are able to remain in the class. *It is my understanding that those who are dropped from class without having attended regularly and who are on financial aid may be required to repay their financial aid.* In some quarters there is the notion that some absences are excused and others are not. I consider any absence an absence, whether it be attendance at a conference, a relative's performance on a tv show, car trouble, work, a doctor's appointment, a family emergency, or fill in the blank. We meet only once a week, and material shown in class will not be re-shown. Some of the films or clips we will be seeing may be available from Netflix, Hastings, Amazon Prime, or elsewhere. Some, by coincidence, may be shown on such stations as AMC, TBS, Showtime, Cinemax, The Movie Channel, Independent Film Channel, Starz, Encore, etc. Some of the films may be available at the Media Center on campus. (A place to study films for your papers if the films are on DVD and you don't have access to equipment. They should also have machines that play VHS tapes.) Films, like other "texts" (books, paintings, photographs, etc.), are worth multiple viewings, or like music, listening multiple times. The more you look at films and think about them, the more you will see.

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 phone or put it in vibration mode before entering the classroom. Please, no text messaging while in the classroom. If you are text messaging, you will be asked to leave the class.

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.** Email: Rebecca.Tuerk@tamuc.edu

Graduate Student Advising: *Please be sure to send an email to or make an appointment with your graduate director regarding your degree program to ensure that you are on the right track. It is especially important to remember the 12-hour rule: students will lose anything over 12 hours if they have not been fully admitted into a degree program or if they change their program. Doctoral students should contact Dr. Donna Dunbar-Odom: Donna.Dunbar-Odom@tamuc.edu Master's-English students should contact Dr. Susan Stewart: Susan.Stewart@tamuc.edu Master's-Applied Linguistics (TESOL) students should contact Dr. Lucy Pickering: Lucy.Pickering@tamuc.edu Master's-Spanish students should contact Dr. Flavia Belpoliti: Flavia.Belpoliti@tamuc.edu.*

Class Schedule: The key words here are tentative and flexibility. The schedule is tentative because, while it covers the readings, there may be additional readings added or dates may change, depending upon the direction you, as a group, take. In addition, the readings may shift some depending upon who is presenting and when. Flexibility is important because we are dealing with technology, and "things happen." Thus, logistics, time constraints, the failure of technology, possible guests, your preferences, and conferences, we may make changes as we progress during the semester, especially once you decide what you will be presenting to the group.

Key Dates:

October 13 – Midterm examination distributed (take home)

October 20 – Oral presentations begin (tentative)

October 27 – Midterm examination due

November 10 – Book review due

Dec. 1 – Annotated bibliography due

December 8 – Paper due + abstract

December 15 – Meeting or final? – To be determined

If possible, prior to first class meeting, please read: short story – D. H. Lawrence, "The Horse Dealer's Daughter" – can be found on-line:

<http://www.literature.org/authors/lawrence-david-herbert/england-my-england/chapter-08.html>

Note: The following abbreviations apply to the reading assignments: FL=Film and Literature; PAD=Pedagogy of Adaptation; BP=Bio-Pics.

Week 1 9/1 Course Introduction: Overview

How Do We Read Fiction? How Do We Read Films?

Assignment: For next time read: FL, 1-51; FL, Thompson, 130-136; PAD, vvi-x; PAD, Cutchins, 87-96.

Week 2 9/8 History of Adaptation

What goes into a Response

For next time read: PAD, Welsh, 97-108; FL, Bazin, 57-64; FL, Stam, 74-88; FL, Venuti, 89-103.

Response 1 Due Next Time

Week 3 9/15 Issues of Fidelity

List of Books for Review

For next time read: FL, Lindsay, 125-129; FL, Münsterberg, 137-143; Eisenstein, 144-146; FL, Benjamin, 147-157; FL, Mayne, 252-261

Week 4 9/22 Literature and Film--Where it All Began

For next time read, FL Bluestone, 239-251; FL, Either Tribble or Lehmann; FL, Either Schor or Galeprin; PAD, McParland, 75-86.

Week 5 9/29 Literature and Film, II

Read for next time: PAD, Metz, 109-121; FL, Corrigan, 274-294

Week 6 10/6 Does it Always Have to be "High" Literature?

Read for next time: BP, 1-19; FL, Astruc, 181-184; FL, Reid, 158-167; FL, Boozer, 199-220; FL, Wollen, 185-198; Braudy, 232-238

Week 7 10/13 Writers, Directors, Actors, and Adaptation

Discussion of readings

Read for next time: BP, 21-71, PAD, Leitch, 1-20; PAD, Phillips, 21-33; PAD, Lopez, 35-52

Oral Presentations begin next week

Midterm Examination distributed (take home--due in two weeks)

Week 8 10/20 Adaptation Uses in the Classroom

Oral Presentation

Read for next time: BP, 73-125; FL, Leitch, 104-121; Leitch, "Adaptation Studies at a Crossroads"

Week 9 10/27 Adaptation Studies at a Crossroads?

Midterm examination due

Oral Presentation

Read for next time: FL, Hutcheon, 385-402; FL, Jenkins, 403-424; FL, Murray, 365-384

Week 10 11/3 New Directions

Book Review Due / Discussion of Book Reviews

Oral Presentation

Book review/commentary due next time.

Week 11 11/10 Adaptations & Bio-Pics

Book Review DUE

Oral Presentation

Read for next time: FL, Cardwell, 168-178; PAD, Bondari, 63-74

Week 12 11/17 Adaptations & TV

Oral Presentation

Read for next time: TBA

Week 13 11/24

Oral Presentation

Annotated Bibliography Due Next Class

Week 14 12/1

Annotated Bibliography Due

Oral Presentation

DUE NEXT CLASS: PAPER + Abstract

Week 15 12/8

PAPER DUE + Abstract

Course evaluations

Oral Presentation

Week 16 It's a Wrap--Final Examination Week/Thurs, 12/15

(Final presentations / other loose ends / exam if needed)