

Text and Film
50:350:261:90
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Office hours by appointment

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Course Description

Both novels and films derive their imaginative power and capture our attention through telling stories. Yet *how* these mediums go about telling stories is markedly different—even when conveying the same basic plot. This course will examine the problem and art of adapting prose narratives to film. For example, how can a director remain “faithful” to a 300-page novel when a film’s running time is roughly 2 hours? Because we will be examining contemporary adaptations of eighteenth-century texts, we will also ask how newer media, such as film, can render legible the cultural assumptions of historical readers.

Learning Goals

In this course students will learn to. . .

- Speak and write about film using a specific vocabulary intended to capture the aesthetic work of this visual and aural medium.
- Understand clearly the aesthetic attributes of the eighteenth-century novel and how its content gets re-interpreted through film in the twentieth- and twenty-first centuries.
- Discuss adaptation as a transformative and interpretive artistic practice
- Write a short paper performing a “close reading” of a film and pass a series of examinations covering key topics.

What Makes this Class a General Education Course?

Of the top grossing films per year, only about [10-15% come from original screenplays](#). The rest are adaptations from textual media, such as comic books or novels. In this way, Hollywood has a powerful role in re-interpreting narratives—especially historical ones—for a wide audience. For some viewers, watching a film might be their first introduction to a historical event, another culture, or a political controversy. Therefore, it is important for students to examine the original source text and to analyze how it gets re-interpreted for a new audience in a new medium. In this class, students will read four important eighteenth-century novels and analyze the painstaking work it takes to adapt them successfully in film. The skills learned in the process will create the foundation for students to foster critical viewing practices of popular media. Hopefully, it will also spark student interest in the eighteenth-century, the period from which our country takes its most cherished values, such as religious freedom, equality of opportunity, and personal liberty.

Texts

Novels

- Anonymous, *The Woman of Colour: A Tale* ISBN-13: 978-1551111766
- Jane Austen, *Emma* ISBN-13: 978-0143107712
- Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe* ISBN-13: 978-0199553976

- Pierre Choderlos de Laclos, *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, Douglas Parmée, Trans. ISBN-13: 978-0199536481

Films

- *Clueless* (1995) Dir. Amy Heckerling (available through Canvas Reading Lists)
- *Cast Away* (2000) Dir. Robert Zemeckis (available on Prime Video \$3.99)
- *Dangerous Liaisons* (1988) Dir. Stephen Frears (available through Canvas Reading Lists)
- *Belle* (2013) Dir. Amma Asante (available on Prime Video \$3.99)

Requirements and Grading

- Playposit Video Lecture Questions 5%
- Textual Annotation Assignments 5%
- Attendance & participation via Discussions 20%
- 7 quizzes 15% (Lowest score will be dropped)
- Midterm 20%
- Final exam 20%
- 1, 3-4 page paper 15%

Playposit Video Lecture Questions

This semester I will be using a tool called Playposit that allows the instructor to make lectures interactive by asking questions during recorded lectures. Your responses to these questions will be graded. (Each lecture will typically have 5 questions worth 1-point each.) However, you will be able to answer multiple times until you get the question correct. You will also be able to rewind the lecture to find the correct answer to the question. *Please note: in order to have your points counted, Playposit requires that you finish viewing the lecture.* So, even if you have answered the last question, you must view the entire video to receive credit for your answers. *Also, not all recorded lectures will have Playposit questions embedded within them, depending on what other assessments are also due during that Module.*

Textual Annotation Assignments

In selected Modules and class periods you will have to read and annotate an article. Detailed instructions for how to annotate the selected articles are available in Module 1. Under this “Textual Annotation” heading, you will also be doing a short Storyboarding Exercise, which mimics how directors sketch out how they would stage a particular scene. Instructions for completing the Storyboarding Exercise are within the Video “Dangerous Liaisons Storyboard Exercise” and the Template for the Storyboard Itself, which can all be found under Module 12, Class 2.

Attendance and Participation via Discussions

The majority of our direct interaction about the texts we read will take place via Canvas Discussions. Not participating in an assigned class discussion will seriously affect your final grade. Since we meet virtually, reading and responding to your peers’ comments is vital. To receive an “A” for the participation portion, you must not only be a consistent participant in online Discussions but also be “exceeding expectations” with the quality of

your posts. For a rubric and FAQ explaining how to succeed in your online posts, please see “Guidelines for Online Classes” under Module 1 in Canvas.

Quizzes

There will be 7 quizzes spaced periodically throughout the various course Modules. The quiz will cover all of the material discussed since the previous quiz. There will also be plot questions assessing whether students are completing the assigned reading. The quizzes consist of 10 multiple choice questions. The lowest quiz score will be dropped at the end of the semester.

Midterm

Via Canvas, you will take a midterm, assessing your knowledge of content covered in the earlier Modules (Everything from the Yale Basic Terms website through *Robinson Crusoe*.) The exam will consist of objective type questions, such as multiple choice, matching, fill-in-the blank and short answer.

Final Exam

During the University’s scheduled exam period you will take a final exam online via Canvas. This exam will be cumulative (covering the entire semester), but the emphasis will be on the second half of the semester (material covered after the midterm). The exam will consist of objective type questions--multiple choice, matching, fill-in-the blank and short answer—and one essay question.

Paper

You will be asked to write a short 3-4 page paper performing a “close reading” of a scene from one of the assigned films. Full instructions will be posted on Canvas detailing exactly what is required.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY, POLICIES, AND PENALTIES

Academic Integrity

Refraining from plagiarism or cheating in any form fosters an environment of fairness vital to your academic success and that of your peers. Because “grey areas” can appear in a variety of situations, please review the Rutgers-Camden academic integrity policy: <https://deanofstudents.camden.rutgers.edu/sites/deanofstudents/files/Academic%20Integrity%20Policy.pdf> (Links to an external site.) You will be held accountable to this standard. If you have any questions about citations, group work, or exam preparation, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Students with Disabilities

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all University educational programs. To receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a

disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines> (Links to an external site.). If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form at <https://webapps.rutgers.edu/student-ods/forms/registration> (Links to an external site.). Disability services can be found at: <https://success.camden.rutgers.edu/disability-services> (Links to an external site.)

Late Assignments

Late assignments are subject to a reduction of 1/3 of a letter grade for each calendar day past the due date. For example, if the assignment is due Monday and the student turns it in on Tuesday, the submission that would have been an A will now earn an A-. On Wednesday the grade will become a B+, on Thursday a B, and so on.

Reading About and Discussing Difficult Subjects

A guiding principle of instruction in this class is that every student will be respected and protected during our time together this semester. At the same time, the wide ranging nature of academic inquiry in the college classroom routinely means engagement with topics, language, and situations that can provoke discomfort and confusion. This course, in particular, explores material that may deal with challenging topics such as racism, homophobia, misogyny, sexual violence, anti-Semitism, ableism, classism, and other ways in which privileged groups have dominated or abused groups that have been historically marginalized. While every effort will be made to discuss these topics with sensitivity, please be aware that class readings and class discussion will be devoted to exploring them. If you feel you are unable to read or to discuss sensitive topics at this time, please address your concerns with the professor at the start of the semester.

ASSIGNMENTS

Module 1: Introductions, Basic Terms, and Adaptation

Class 1

T 01.17-W 01.18 Introduction to the Course

- View "Meet Your Instructor" Video
- Review "Guidelines for Online Classes" document
- Review Syllabus carefully and post any questions under Canvas Discussions entitled "Questions about Syllabus?"
- Post a response to 2 "Getting to Know You" Questions under Canvas Discussions

Class 2

W 01.18-F 01.20 Basic Terms and The Concept of Adaptation

- Familiarize yourself with Yale Film Studies Department, Basic Terms Guide (in Canvas)
- View Module 1, Class 2 "Terms and Adaptations" Video

- Annotate Deborah Cartmell, “100+ Years of Adaptation, or Adaptation as the Art Form of Democracy” pp. 1-15, (in Canvas)

Module 2: *Clueless* and *Emma*

Class 1

Su 01.22-T 01.24

- View *Clueless* (1995) Dir. Amy Heckerling, available via Canvas Reading Lists
- Post a response to 2 Questions in Module 2, class 1 Discussion *Clueless*

Class 2

W 01.25-F 01.27

- Read “Tips for Reading *Emma*” pp. xxxi-xxxii
- Read *Emma* pp. 4-67 (vol. 1, chs. 1-9)
- View Module 2, Class 2 Video *Emma* pp. 4-67
- Post a response to 2 Questions in Module 2, class 2 Discussion *Emma*

Module 3: *Clueless* and *Emma* (continued)

Class 1

Su 01.29-T 01.31

- Read *Emma* pp. 67-135 (vol 1, chs. 10-18; vol. 2, chs. 1-2)
- **Take Quiz 1: basics: film terms and adaptation**

Class 2

W 02.01-F 02.03

- Read *Emma* pp. 135-197 (vol. 2, chs. 3-9)
- Watch Video *Emma* pp. 135-197
- Post a response to 2 Questions in Module 3, class 2 Discussion *Emma*

Module 4: *Clueless* and *Emma* (continued)

Class 1

Su 02.05-T 02.07

- Read *Emma* pp. 197-269 (vol. 2 chs. 9-18, vol. 3 chs. 1-2)
- View Module 4, Class 1 Intertextuality in *Clueless*
- Post a response to 2 Questions in Module 4, class 1 Discussion *Emma* pp. 197-269

Class 2

W 02.08-F 02.10

- Read *Emma* pp. 269-326 (vol. 3 chs. 3-10)
- Post a response to 2 Questions in Module 4, Class 2 *Emma* pp. 269-326
- **Take Quiz 2: *Emma* and *Clueless***

Module 5: *Clueless* and *Emma* (continued) plus *Castaway*

Class 1

Su 02.12-T 02.14

- Read *Emma* pp. 326-392 (vol. 3 chs. 11-18)
- Post a response to 2 Questions in Module 5, Class 1 Discussion *Clueless* and *Emma* pp. 326-392
- **Take Quiz 3: *Emma* and *Clueless***

Class 2

W 02.15-F 02.17

- View *Cast Away* (2000) Dir. Robert Zemeckis, available on Prime Video
- View Module 5, Class 2 “Cinematography Basics *Castaway*”

Module 6: *Robinson Crusoe* and *Castaway*

Class 1

Su 02.19-T 02.21

- Read *Robinson Crusoe* pp. 1-60 (to “The Journal”)
- View Module 6, Class 1 “Intro Robinson Crusoe”
- Post a response to 2 Questions in Module 6, Class 1 *Crusoe* and *Castaway*

Class 2

W 02.22-F 02.24

- Read *Robinson Crusoe* pp. 60-120
- Post a response to 2 Questions in Module 6, Class 1 Discussion *Robinson Crusoe* pp. 1-60
- **Take Quiz 4: *Robinson Crusoe* and *Cast Away***

Module 7: *Robinson Crusoe* and *Castaway*

Class 1

Su 02.26-T 02.28

- Read *Robinson Crusoe* pp. 120-180
- View Module 7, Class 1 Video *Crusoe* pp. 120-180
- Post a response to 2 Questions in Module 7, Class 1 *Crusoe* pp. 120-180

Class 2

W 03.01-F 03.03

- Read *Robinson Crusoe* pp. 180-220
- Post a response to 2 Questions in Module 7, Class 2 *Crusoe* pp. 180-220

Module 8: *Robinson Crusoe* and *Castaway*

Class 1

Su 03.05-T 03.07

- Read *Robinson Crusoe* pp. 220-258
- Post a response to 2 Questions in Module 8, Class 1 *Crusoe* pp. 220-258
- Review “Topics for Study” for Midterm

Class 2

W 03.08-F 03.10

- **TAKE MIDTERM EXAMINATION**

SPRING BREAK

Module 9: *Dangerous Liaisons*

Class 1

Su 03.19-T 03.21

- View *Dangerous Liaisons* (1988) Dir. Stephen Frears, available streaming under Canvas Reading Lists

- Read *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* pp. 1-25
- View Video Lecture *Dangerous Liaisons* Introduction
- View Scene “Opening Sequence from *Dangerous Liaisons* Film”

Class 2

W 03.22-F 03.24

- Read *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* pp. 26-75
- Post a response to 2 Questions in Module 9, Class 2 Discussion *Dangerous Liaisons* pp 26-75
- **Take Quiz 5: Who’s Who in Dangerous Liaisons**

Module 10: *Dangerous Liaisons*

Class 1

Su 03.26-T 03.28

- Read *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* pp. 76-125
- Post a response to 2 Questions in Module 10, Class 1 Discussion *Dangerous Liaisons* pp 76-125

Class 2

W 03.29-F 03.31

- Read *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* pp. 126-175
- **Submit 3-4 Paper Due: “Close Reading” of a scene via Canvas**

Module 11: *Dangerous Liaisons*

Class 1

Su 04.02-T 04.04

- Read *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* pp. 176-225
- Watch Module 11, Class 1 Video *Dangerous Liaisons* pp. 176-225
- Watch 2 YouTube clips of Valmont’s rape of Cecil from the original adaptation and a radical adaptation called *Cruel Intentions*
- Post a response to 2 Questions in Module 11, Class 1 *Dangerous Liaisons* pp. 176-225

Class 2

W 04.05-F 04.07

- Read *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* pp. 225-275
- Post a response to 2 Questions in Module 11, Class 2 *Dangerous Liaisons* pp. 225-275
- **Take Quiz 6: LLD and DL**

Module 12: *Dangerous Liaisons*

Class 1

Su 04.09-T 04.11

- Read *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* pp. 276-326
- Watch Module 12, Class 1 Video *Dangerous Liaisons* pp. 276-326
- Watch YouTube clip of “Valmont Breaks Up with Tourvel”
- Post a response to 2 Questions Module 12, Class 1 *Dangerous Liaisons* pp. 276-326

Class 2

W 04.12-F 04.14

- Read *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* pp. 326-372
- Watch *Dangerous Liaisons* Storyboard Exercise
- Submit Storyboard Exercise via Canvas
- Post a response to 2 Questions Module 12, Class 2 *Dangerous Liaisons* pp. 326-372

Module 13: *The Woman of Color and Belle*

Class 1

Su 04.16-T 04.18

- View *Belle* (2013) Dir. Amma Asante, available on Prime Video
- View “Dido Elizabeth Belle and Lady Elizabeth Murray” Portrait
- View Module 13, Class 1 Video *Belle*

Class 2

W 04.19-F 04.21

- Read *The Woman of Colour* pp. 53-100
- Annotate “Dido Belle: the Artworld Enigma who Inspired a Movie”
- Post a response to 2 Questions in Module 13, Class 2 Discussion *The Woman of Colour* pp. 53-100

Module 14: *The Woman of Color and Belle*

Class 1

Su 04.23-T 04.25

- Read *The Woman of Colour* pp. 100-146
- Watch Video Module 14, Class 1 *The Woman of Colour* pp. 100-146
- **Take Quiz 7: Did you watch *Belle*?**

Class 2

W 04.26-F 04.28

- Read *The Woman of Colour* pp. 146-189
- Post a response to 2 Questions in Module 14, Class 2 Discussion *The Woman of Colour* pp. 146-189

Module 15: Final Exam Review

Class 1

Su 04.30-M 05.01

- Read “Final Review Topics Text and Film”
- View Video Final Review Text and Film

FINAL EXAM VIA CANVAS CAN BE TAKEN ANYTIME BETWEEN 8AM ON 05.04.22 TO 11:59PM ON 05.10.22