FYS 049: ADAPTATION – FILMS

Instructor Nick Renkoski
Fine Arts Center 0036
Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:30 – 1:45pm
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This course examines movies that have been adapted to the screen from other mediums and asks you to critically analyze the works as both movies and as adaptations. The movies will be adapted from media of all kinds from stage plays to operas to literary classics to popular fiction, and you will be asked to process your thoughts on what challenges are present in adapting certain media and whether or not the movie succeeded both on its own and in honoring its source material. The goal is to recognize what is uniquely cinematic and how those aspects can be used to translate and, in some cases, enhance material from other areas.

Required and Optional Texts
Henry V, William Shakespeare
Jaws, Peter Benchley
The Age of Innocence, Edith Wharton
Oil!, Upton Sinclair
Pygmalion, George Bernard Shaw

Assignments
Every student can anticipate writing several essays analyzing the movies we’ve been watching for class, as well as contributing to an ongoing critical-narrative exploration of adaptation theory. The course will be broken into three sequences. For the first two, the class will provide essays on the same subject. For the final sequence, students will be able to choose their subject from a list.

All assignments for this class may be read by all members of the class and may often form the basis of class discussion.
Final Grade
Students are graded in these four areas: essays and daily assignments, the final project, participation and attendance. The percentage breakdown of these areas is as follows:
Attendance: 20%
Participation: 20%
Essays and daily assignment: 35%
Final project: 25%

Individual assignments will receive detailed feedback but not a letter grade. However, students will be alerted of their current grade four times during the semester; once at the quarter point of the semester, once at the halfway point, once right before their final essay is received and the final grade at the end of the semester.

Students who turn in every assignment on time and at a satisfactory level will receive a guaranteed minimum writing grade of “B.”

Before the end of the semester, all students will meet with me at least once during office hours (Fridays, 3 p.m. – 5 p.m.) to review and discuss their progress. These meetings will be held outside of our regular class time, and every effort will be made to accommodate students’ schedules.

Frequently in this class we will workshop each other’s work. This means we will consider an adaptation critically, giving our detailed impressions and making suggestions.

The goal of these discussions is to be constructive and helpful. Disagreements are a necessary part of this process, but it will be important for students to remember that they are here to help each other, not to tear each other down. As we will be discussing subjective matter, differences in opinion will arise and the goal is not to try to change anyone’s mind as much as to adequately express your own views.

Absences
Students are required to attend class. Because of illness or other unforeseen situations, 100% attendance is not demanded, simply hoped for. It is possible for
a student to miss three classes and not have it affect his or her grade (though this will most likely impact the student’s participation grade, which is based on a student’s performance in class). After three absences, the penalty to the student’s grade will be severe, culminating at six absences, with a failure of the course.

Two late arrivals or early departures equal one absence.

Answering a phone or texting in class equals one absence.

Participation is a subjective measure but will be graded on the frequency and quality of contributions in class discussion as well as bringing required materials to class and adhering to classroom policies.

Classroom Policies
Students are expected and required to respect others and actively help create a productive learning environment. Any type of class disruption will result in a lowered final grade. The use of disruptive electronic devices during group discussion, including but not limited to phones and mp3 players, is prohibited. Phones must be off. Disrespectful behaviors, like texting or moving one’s belongings around loudly, or even continuing to work when other students (or the professor) are presenting, will result in a significantly lowered grade. On-time, prepared attendance is required at all class meetings. Any student asked to leave the classroom for any reason must comply; failure to comply will result in forfeiture of the entire participation grade.

Plagiarism
Work submitted in this course will be original to the author. When the work of others is included, it will be indicated and attributed. If there is unattributed work that is intended as homage, it must be reasonably clear in the writing.

Any work presenting the ideas or words of others as though they were your own is grounds for failure of the course.

Late Work
Assignments will not be accepted late. Arrangements can be made if unforeseen circumstances arise, but those circumstances will be judged on a case-by-case basis. Should any technical problems arise, formatting and presentation are less important than timeliness, meaning that papers can be submitted in the body of an email or even photographically. These extreme cases will be taken with the assumption that the work will be submitted properly later.

Technology Policies
Students are not to use their computers in class for any reason, unless specifically instructed to do so. Cellphone use in class is also prohibited. If an unavoidable
situation requires a student to remain available via cellphone, the student must alert the instructor before class and an exception will be made. Cellphone calls taken under these circumstances will be conducted outside of the room.

We were required to add this too: This is from 2007 so people might change. Might want to check into it.

Accommodations
If you have a disability and will require academic accommodations in this course, I am happy to discuss your needs. Accommodations are coordinated through Student Disability Services. Please contact Michelle Laughlin, Student Disability Services coordinator, 271-1835, michelle.laughlin@drake.edu.

This syllabus, class calendar and assignments are subject to change.

Assignments Calendar
8.28 First Assignment due in class
9.9 Assignment due in class
9.18 Assignment due in class
9.30 Assignment due in class
10.9 Assignment due in class
10.14 Fall break, class will not meet
10.16 Officially choose final project subject
10.23 Assignment due in class
11.4 Assignment due in class
11.18 Assignment due in class
11.27 Thanksgiving, class will not meet.
12.4 Final Assignment Due
End of Semester
(This class has no final exam.)

Please note that this calendar will change throughout the semester. More information will be added and some dates may change to suit the pace of the class. Please check for updates weekly.