

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION

A. Department Information

Division: Humanities and Social Science
Department: English
Course ID: ENGL 153
Course Title: Literature and Film
Units: 3
Lecture: 2 Hours
Lab: 2 Hours
Prerequisite: ENGL 101

B. Catalog and Schedule Description:

A study of literature adapted into film. Students will read short stories, novels, and plays; view the film(s) adapted from each literary work; and write critical and analytic essays about the literature, the films, and their interplay.

II. NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT: One

III. EXPECTED OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS:

Upon completion of this course, a student will be able to:

- A. Identify and analyze the elements of film
- B. Identify and analyze the elements of fiction
- C. Identify and analyze the choices, compromises, and changes required in adapting literary texts into the medium of film
- D. Form a judgment about the relative success of particular adaptations and support judgments with evidence from film/text
- E. Place films/texts within historical movements, styles and theories
- F. Write critical and analytic essays on fiction and film

IV. COURSE CONTENT:

Note: Selection of film and literature should present students with a range of periods, styles, narrative techniques, and cultural diversity.

A. Film:

- 1. Elements of film
 - a) Frame, Shot, Scene, Sequence
 - b) Dialog
 - c) Set Design
 - d) Cinematography
 - e) Camera
 - f) Sound
 - g) Character and Casting
 - h) Lighting
 - i) Editing and Montage
 - j) Script
 - k) Acting
 - l) Film theories and styles
- 2. Theoretical and critical background
 - a) Historical origins/context of films
 - b) Situating films within cinematic theories and styles (auteur, impressionist, neo-realism the invisible style, etc.)
 - c) Discussion of biography of filmmakers as appropriate
 - d) Introduce various critical approaches and their use (Historical/Biographical, New Critical/Formalist, Feminist, Structuralist, Marxist, Psychoanalytic, Archetypal, Deconstructionist, and Reader-Response)
 - e) Reading of essays of film criticism

B. Literature

1. Elements of fiction/drama
 - a) Narrative style
 - b) Dialogue
 - c) Character development
 - d) Thematic concerns
 - e) Tone and Style
 - f) Setting
 - g) Symbolism
 - h) Point of view
 - i) Literary movements and criticism
2. Theoretical and critical background:
 - a) Historical origins/context of literature
 - b) Situating literature within cinematic theories and styles (surrealism, modernism, beat, etc.)
 - c) Biography of authors
 - d) Critical approaches and their use (e.g. Historical/Biographical, New
 - e) Critical/Formalist, Feminist, Structuralist, Marxist, Psychoanalytic, Archetypal,
 - f) Deconstructionist and Reader-Response)
 - g) Essays on literary criticism

V. **METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:**

- A. Readings
- B. Lectures
- C. Discussions
- D. Written exercises
- E. Film Viewings

VI. **TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:**

- A. Read the short story Blow-up by Julio Cortazar and see the film Blow-Up directed by Michelangelo Antonioni. Write a paper in which you compare use of point of view and narrative technique in the film and story. You might want to focus on the idea of the “blow-up” and its use in the story in contrast to the film.
- B. Read the Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald and see the 1974 adaptation directed by Jack Clayton. The movie has been criticized as a failure as a film, and most importantly, as an adaptation. In your own judgment, does the film hold up? Defend your position. You might want to focus on the alterations in setting (cinematography), point of view (use of Nick Carraway as narrator), and casting choices (in contrast to Fitzgerald’s descriptions).

VII. **EVALUATION(S):**

- A. Methods of Evaluation
 1. Quizzes:
 - a) Sample questions:
 - i) To test understanding of critical terms: Define “shot,” “scene,” and “sequence.”
 - ii) To test basic facts from readings and films: Where is body hidden in Rear Window?
 2. Short written assignments (written in class or as homework)
 - a) Sample topic: Describe at least three ways in which Robbe-Grillet (in the story) and Alain Renais (in the film) disrupt our normal expectations of narrative in Last Year in Marienbad.
 3. Short Papers (3-5 pages)
 - a) Sample topics:
 - i) Compare/contrast Burt Lancaster’s performance (including the appropriateness of his being cast in the role) in The Swimmer to the character in the story. What techniques do John Cheever and filmmakers (director, screenwriter, actor) use to define this character? What techniques are similar and what are different?

- ii) Using one of the text-film pairings we have recently discussed, imagine yourself as a filmmaker. If you could remake the film, what changes would you make? Why? Be sure to describe in detail your changes.

4. Final Research Paper

a) Sample topics:

- i) Read a story or novella from list provided by instructor and see film adaptation. Evaluate the text and film both as individual works as well as in relation to each other. Which is more successful? Why? Be sure to use appropriate literary and film criticism to help back your position.
- ii) Read Hemingway's story and see film To Have and Have Not. In this adaptation we have one of America's great writers being adapted by another: Faulkner wrote the screenplay. Think about this situation as well as what director Howard Hawks and the cast bring to this adaptation. Based on this adaptation, write a paper in which you discuss the implications of this situation. Some guiding questions might include: Is the idea of "faithfulness" in film adaptation important? In what ways and when should faithfulness be a concern? In what ways is the film a separate work of art? What impact does the collaborative nature of film have? Who is a film's "author"? Is that even a valid question?

5. Exams

a) Sample questions:

- i) To test understanding of terms, short definition or answer questions such as: Explain what happens when a camera "pans"; or, Define "symbol" and give an example from one of the stories you have read.
- ii) To test critical and analytic understanding, brief essay questions such as: Discuss the epistolary novel Dangerous Liaisons and the film adaptation directed by Stephen Frears. How is the epistolary device used in the book and how is it adapted by the filmmakers? You should note the device's importance to character, plot, and other elements of the literature and film.

6. Class Participation

B. Frequency of Evaluation

- 1. Weekly or random quizzes
- 2. Six (6) to eight (8) short written assignments
- 3. At least three (3) short papers
- 4. One final research paper
- 5. One midterm and a final exam
- 6. Opportunity for students to discuss and participate each class period

VIII. TYPICAL TEXT(S):

Film and Literature, Wendell Aycock and Michael Schoenecke (eds), Texas Tech UP, 1998.

Novel to Film: An Introduction to the Theory of Adaptation, Brian McFarlane, Oxford UP 1996.

Stanley Kubrick and the Art of Adaptation: Three Novels, Three Films, Greg Jenkins, McFarland and Company, 1997.

An Introduction to Film Studies, Jill Nelmes, Routledge, 1996.

Understanding the Film (An Introduction to Film Appreciation), Jan Bone and Ron Johnson, NTC Publishing, 1996.

Film Art: An Introduction, David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, McGraw-Hill, 1996.

Film and Literature: An Introduction, Timothy Corrigan, Prentice Hall, 1998.

Movies and Meaning: An Introduction to Film, Stephen R. Prince, Prentice Hall, 1996.

An Introduction to Film, Thomas Sobchack and Vivian C. Sobchack, Addison-Wesley, 1991.

Film as Literature, Literature as Film: An Introduction to and Bibliography of Film's Relationship to Literature, Harris Ross, Greenwood Publishing, 1987.

No, But I Saw the Movie: The Best Short Stories Ever Made Into Film, David Wheeler (ed), Penguin, 1989.

IX. OTHER SUPPLIES REQUIRED OF STUDENTS: None