

Adaptation, Fall '05—1

Fall '05 ADAPTATION FOR STAGE AND SCREEN TD387D #25456

**Texts:**

Betrayal, Harold Pinter  
Different Seasons, Stephen King  
The Shawshank Redemption: Shooting Script by Frank Darabont  
Novel to Film, Brian McFarland

**Additional readings:**

“Passenger on the Ship of Fools,” by Laura Furman and Lynn C. Miller (on blackboard):  
a play about Katherine Anne Porter’s life and work

“Introduction” from *Adaptations: From Text to Screen, Screen to Text*, ed. By Deborah  
Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan, 1999.

Brian Richardson, “Voice and Narration in Postmodern Drama,” *New Literary History*,  
2001, 32: 681-694.

Allardyce Nicoll, “Film Reality: The Cinema and the Theatre,” from *Film and Theatre*,  
1964.

Joy Gould Boyum, *Double Exposure: Fiction into Film*. New York: Plume, 1985.

Bruce Kawin, "An Outline of Film Voices," *Film Quarterly*, Winter, 1984-85, pp. 39-46.

Susan Sontag, "Theatre and Film" from *Styles of a Radical Will*. New York: Delta  
Books, 1969.

Linda Williams, "When the Woman Looks," *Revision: Essays in Feminist Film  
Criticism*, eds. Mary Ann Doane, Patricia Mellencamp, Linda Williams. Frederick, MD:  
Univ. Publications of America, 1983, pp. 83-99.

**Class anthology:** each student will contribute one published short story or creative  
nonfiction narrative to the anthology; these stories will form the case studies for  
discussion and adaptation projects. This allows us all to study the stories that will be  
adapted ahead of time. Adapting the story first to film and then for live performance  
allows for each student to see the limits and possibilities of each medium (fiction, film,  
live performance) concretely. Please limit your class entry to 60 pages. If you plan to  
work with a longer piece, make sure your offering contains the essential formal and  
structural components of the original.

Sept. 1 Orientation

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6 McFarland (from text) and Cartmell (Xerox) introductions; screening fiction to film; films for reports chosen

8 read “Rita Hayworth...” In *Different Seasons*; narrative structure discussion

13 shooting script discussion of *Shawshank*; assorted clips

15 reports on adaptations

20 reports on adaptations

22 reports on adaptations

27 writing tba

29 script I due; respondents chosen

Oct. 4 critique/ peer review of script I

6 cont.

11 cont.

13 cont. and wrap-up discussion on adaptation I

18 narrative, film, theatre discussion; readings: Richardson, Nicoll, and Sontag

20 *Betrayal* screening

25 discussion of *Betrayal*

27 script workshop

Nov. 1 Laura Furman, guest speaker; reading: Porter play (blackboard); archival materials to stage

3 scripts due

8 critique/peer review

10 cont.

15 cont.

17 cont.

22 paper research

24 happy Thanksgiving

29 adaptation challenge papers due; Oral reports

Dec. 1 reports cont.

6 reports, cont.

8 reports, cont. and wrap-up

DESCRIPTION:

This seminar explores narrative structures and strategies, styles, and possibilities in three media: prose fiction/creative nonfiction, live performance and film. Emphasis will be on writing and interpretation. Through readings and screenings, students will apply strategies of how each of these forms function narratively from the points of view of author/directors and spectators. Students will write adaptations of fiction for both live performance and film/television.

CLASS GOALS:

- 1) to become proficient at conceptualizing (for stage, for film, in prose fiction) your own critical, theoretical, and/or artistic vision of a text;
- 2) to explore how the medium of presentation affects the telling of narratives, the structure of narratives, the interaction between spectator, reader, and "text;"
- 3) to uncover strategies for transforming elements of texts in different media effectively and to scrutinize theories of adaptation;
- 4) to become more perceptive practitioners/critics of adaptation.

Films for Adaptation Reports:

Just out in 2005:

- "Asylum" (novel by Patrick McGrath, dir. By David Mackenzie)  
"The Constant Gardener" (novel by John Le Carre, dir. By Fernando Meirelles)

Classic films:

- "Housekeeping" (novel by Marilyn Robinson, dir. by Bill Forsyth)  
"Ordinary People" (directed by Robert Redford, novel by Judith Guest)  
"Beloved"(directed by Jonathan Demme, novel by Toni Morrison)  
"Stand by Me" (story by Stephen King, dir. by Rob Reiner)  
"Don't Look Now" (story by Daphne du Maurier, dir. by Nicholas Roeg)  
"The Talented Mr. Ripley" (directed by Anthony Minghella, novel by Patricia Highsmith)  
"Ethan Frome" (directed by John Madden, novel by Edith Wharton)  
"The Color Purple" (directed by Steven Spielberg, novel by Alice Walker)  
*The Remains of the Day*, novel by Kazuo Ishiguro, dir. by  
"The Object of My Affection" (novel by Stephen McCauley, dir. by Nicholas Hytner)  
"A River Runs Through It" (directed by Robert Redford, novella by Norman Maclean)  
*Blade Runner*, story by Phillip K. Dick "Do Electric Sheep..."  
"To Kill A Mockingbird" (directed by Robert Mulligan, novel by Harper Lee)  
"Sense and Sensibility" (novel by Jane Austen, dir. by Ang Lee)  
"Howard's End" (novel by E.M. Forster, Merchant & Ivory prod.)  
"The Accidental Tourist" (novel by Anne Tyler, dir. by Lawrence Kasdan)  
"The Heiress" (novella by Henry James [*Washington Square*], dir. by Wm. Wyler)

"A Thousand Acres" (directed by Jocelyn Moorhouse, novel by Jane Smiley)  
"Mary Reilly" (directed by Stephen Frears, novel by Valerie Martin)  
"Wise Blood" (story by Flannery O'Connor, dir. by John Huston)  
"The Maltese Falcon" (novel by Dashiell Hammett, dir. by John Huston)  
"Maurice" (novel by E.M. Forster, Merchant & Ivory prod.)  
"One True Thing" (directed by Carl Franklin, novel by Anna Quindlen)  
any of the American Short Story series (for ex. "Berenice Bobs her Hair" story by F. Scott Fitzgerald, or "Barn Burning" by Wm. Faulkner, see Vulcan on 29th)  
"Before and After" (film directed by Barbet Schroeder, novel by Rosellen Brown)  
"The Shining" (film directed by Stanley Kubrick, novel by Stephen King)  
"The Age of Innocence" (novel by Edith Wharton, dir. by Martin Scorsese)

#### REPORT RESOURCES:

##### Film and Narrative:

Adaptations: From Text to Screen, Screen to Text, ed. By Deborah Catmell and Imelda Whelehan, 1999.

Brian Richardson, "Voice and Narration in Postmodern Drama," *New Literary History*, 2001, 32: 681-694.

Joy Gould Boyum, *Double Exposure: Fiction into Film*. New York: Plume, 1985.

Bruce Kawin, "An Outline of Film Voices," *Film Quarterly*, Winter, 1984-85, pp. 39-46.

Judith Mayne, "Readers, Spectators, and Classical Film Narrative," in *Private Novels, Public Films*. Athens: U of Georgia Press, 1988.

Judith Mayne, *The Woman at the Keyhole*

Susan Sontag, "Theatre and Film" from *Styles of a Radical Will*. New York: Delta Books, 1969.

##### Gender and Film:

Teresa de Lauretis, "Rethinking Women's Cinema: Aesthetics and Feminist Theory," *Technologies of Gender*. Bloomington: U. of Indiana Press, 1987.

Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" and "What's Wrong with 'Images of Women'" by Griselda Pollock from *The Sexual Subject: A Screen Reader in Sexuality*. New York: Routledge, 1992.

Linda Williams, "When the Woman Looks," *Revision: Essays in Feminist Film Criticism*, eds. Mary Ann Doane, Patricia Mellencamp, Linda Williams. Frederick, MD: Univ. Publications of America, 1983, pp. 83-99.

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Screenwriting:

Alex Epstein, *Crafty Screenwriting: Writing Movies That Get Made*, Holt, 2002, excerpts.

Joel Engel, *Oscar-Winning Screenwriters on Screenwriting*, excerpts, Hyperion, 2002.

Rhetoric and Film, Literature and Film

David Bordwell, *Narrative in the Fiction Film*. Madison: U. of Wisconsin Press, 1985.

-----*Making Meaning: Inference and Rhetoric in the Interpretation of Cinema*.

Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1989. See particularly Chap. 10, "Rhetoric in Action: Seven Models of Psycho," pp. 224-248, on reserve in my office.

Seymour Chapman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film*. Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1978.

Keith Cohen, *Film and Fiction/The Dynamics of Exchange*. New Haven: Yale U Press, 1979.

Peter Reynolds, ed. *Novel Images: Literature in Performance*. New York: Routledge, 1993.

Harris Ross, *Film as Literature, Literature as Film*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1987.

Film and Theatre

Eric Bentley, "Realism and the Cinema," from *The Playwright as Thinker*. New York:: HBJ, 1967.

Gary R. Edgerton, ed. "Film and Theatre" by Gary Waller in *Film and the Arts in Symbiosis*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1988.

William T. Leonard, *Theatre: Stage to Screen to Television*. Metucheon, NJ:\_\_\_\_\_, 1981, in PCL reference room

Edward Murray, *The Cinematic Imagination: Writers and the Motion Pictures*. New York: Frederick Ungar, 1972.

Allardyce Nicoll, "Film Reality: The Cinema and the Theatre" from *Film and Theatre*, 1964.

Feminism/Sexuality and Cinema

Silvia Bovenschen, "Is There a Feminine Aesthetic?" in *Feminist Aesthetics* ed. Gisela Ecker. Boston: Beacon Press, 1985.

Mary Ann Doane, *The Desire to Desire: the Woman's Film of the 1940's*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987.

Mary Ann Doane, Patricia Mellencamp, Linda Williams, eds. *Revision: Essays in Feminist Film Criticism*, eds. . Frederick, MD: Univ. Publications of America, 1983.

Vito Russo, *The Celluloid Closet: Homosexuality in the Movies*. New York: Harper & Row, 1981.

#### PROJECTS:

1. Short Story Adaptation: Choose a short story and write an adaptation for screen; 12-20 pp. For this assignment, your objective is not to adapt the story faithfully word by word but to transform the story with your own vision. Your objective is to create a valid adaptation by Boyum's reader-response standards and yet to give us your unique view of the story as one reader of the story. For example, you may choose to set a turn of the century story in 1993 or 2010; you may do a feminist or psychoanalytic "reading" of the story, etc. (Include a one or two page single-spaced statement of your adaptation intention/production concept to be distributed to the class on the day we discuss the adaptations. In this statement, discuss your ideal audience for the project and your vision as a reader of the story.)

20% of grade

2. Response to screen adaptations; at least two "readers" will formally respond in class to each student's adaptation. Discuss the chief challenges the adaptor faced and the strategies s/he used in dealing with them in the adaptation; discuss the validity of the reading the adaptation represents in your view and its aesthetic as regards gender/sexuality; be as specific as possible. Time limits: pair of "readers" will plan their presentation together: 15 minutes (observe time strictly)

10% of grade

3. Oral Report on Adaptation: In teams of two, choose a specific adaptation to film from a short story or novel and analyze/evaluate the adaptation. Pay specific attention to transformation of interpretation (in your view as one reader), narrative structure(s), decor/atmosphere/environment, character; characterize the kind of adaptation you believe the film presents. Structure your oral report so that you present the strengths/weaknesses of each performance choice on which you focus. The purpose of the assignment is show the challenges of selection and prioritization, and the challenges of the necessary narrowing of interpretation that film adaptation demands. Use at least two references from the list of Report Resources in your discussion. Illustrate your presentation with selected clips.

15% of grade

4. Stage adaptation: Using the same narrative you adapted to film, adapt this story for stage/live performance. Again, make your vision of the story clear both in your adaptation and in your justification handout. Length: 12-20 pages.

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20%

6. Response to stage adaptation.

10%

7. Final Paper: 8-12 pp. Explore a particular adaptation challenge/issue that arose as you worked on one (or more) of your adaptations this semester. What narrative/technical/other strategies did you employ? How might your approach and/or solution affect your performance practice, teaching, playwrighting or other creative writing, or your critical/theoretical writing? Support your discussion with examples from your own or others' adaptations and from readings from the Resources list or class texts.

15%

For oral reports at end of semester, summarize your challenges and illustrate with script/screening excerpts/class exercises.

10%