

CAS English Spring 2011
“ADAPTATION”
Boston University-College of Communication
Los Angeles Internship Program

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Description and Goals:

The term “adaptation” describes the translation of a text from one form into another. There are countless examples of adaptation from novel, short story, or play to film and from film to television show, among other possibilities. For some readers, texts lose much in the translation, with adaptations failing to equal their sources’ quality. However, in a Darwinian sense, adaptation allows organisms to endure environmental shifts. This alternate view suggests that, in the words of Robert Stam, adaptations “help their sources... ‘survive’...changing environments and changing tastes...”

What difference does genre and form make? What are the opportunities and challenges in adapting a story from one vehicle to another? This course will explore the nature of film, theater, and television through selected case studies in adaptation. In addition, students in this course will work towards several goals: expanding existing textual skills to the study of new genres; recognizing gaps in current adaptation theory; drawing on theoretical concepts to explore issues of authorship in film adaptation and the dialogue among multiple iterations of a single story; rethinking the hegemony of Western models of performance and cultural dominance; developing an appreciation of the complex processes involved in intercultural exchanges by using examples of Shakespeare adaptations around the world; using research to shape interpretations of texts and contexts and developing as critical thinkers and writers.

Readings:

The online digital reading packet is available under “Course Documents” on the course Blackboard site. Please print the readings and bring them to class when they are due.

Main Books:

Robert Stam and Alessandra Raengo (Eds). *Literature and Film. A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Film Adaptation*. Oxford, Blackwell, 2005.

Hutcheon, Linda. *A Theory of Adaptation*. New York, Routledge: 2006.

Jack Boozer (Ed.), *Authorship in Film Adaptation*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2008.

Requirements:

1. Reviews

I will ask you to turn in **3 reviews**. Each review will discuss two texts in relation to adaptation. This means that you will have to identify some points of comparison between the two texts. These points can be thematic, industrial, aesthetic or theoretical. In the review, you can also refer to other films or media texts; but the bulk of the review should deal with the two texts in focus. The review should include the following: (1) a brief introduction of the (film) plots and socio-economic conditions of production, distribution and exhibition; (2) an analysis that compares the

two texts along the axis of your choice. The bulk of the review should be devoted to the analysis. In this part, draw on class discussions and cite relevant readings. The review should also contain a brief evaluation (3), which explains why you would (not) recommend the adapted text to specific audiences. Each review should be about 1000 words = 4 double-spaced pages in 12-point font, 1-inch margins, Times New Roman. **Please bring hard copies of these reviews to class on their due date.**

2. Participation

Active contribution to in-class work:

This is a collaborative class, where much of the learning material will come from what we produce together. You will need to be present, prepared, and engaged in order to benefit the most from the course. In-class work will count towards your participation grade.

3. Group Teaching Project

As we proceed through the semester, I would like you to take increasing ownership for the success of the class and for your own learning. To conclude this process, I will ask you to teach the last two sessions of the course in groups of three or four. Each group will select a topic related to adaptation and draw upon their preparation to have the rest of the class critically and analytically process new information. These last sessions will be planned and coordinated entirely by student leaders. Groups will need to provide us with visual material using the media of their choice, and readings (one or two articles) electronically, or in hard copy, one week before their scheduled teaching session. They will also need to post questions and ideas on Blackboard at least three days before the date of their teaching session.

While the methods of facilitating discussion and other class activities are up to you, bear in mind that this is not a presentation. The emphasis is on engaging and teaching your classmates. By [May 10-14], I will ask you to turn in your individual assessment of your contribution to these teaching sessions, including a list of sources consulted, your notes or other preparations for the teaching session, or collectively created media texts. This material, along with your performance during the teaching sessions, will provide the basis of your grade percentage for this portion of your course work. Do start thinking about possible topics and networking with potential collaborators early on. A list of suggestions is included at the end of the syllabus. I will meet with each group to discuss plans during the week before the teaching sessions.

Grading:

1. 3 (film, etc) reviews	3x20= 60 points
2. Attendance and participation	10 points
3. Teaching project:	30 points
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TOTAL:	100 points

Grading Scale: 94-100 A, 90-93 A-, 87-89 B+, 84-86 B, 80-83 B-, 77-79 C+, 74-76 C, 70-73 C-, 64-69 D, below 64 F.

SCHEDULE

	Topics/Questions	Reading Due	Films screened
Week1 January 18-21	<p>Introductions, Definitions</p> <p>Why adapt? What is <i>not</i> an adaptation? What is the appeal of Adaptations? Vampiric/parasitic/ /biological analogies</p>	<p>Frank P. Tomasulo, “<i>Adaptation as Adaptation.</i>” In <i>Authorship in Film Adaptation</i>, pp. 161-78</p> <p>Robert Stam, “Introduction: The Theory and Practice of Adaptation,” in <i>Literature and Film: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Film Adaptation</i>, Oxford: Blackwell, 2005. 1-30</p> <p>Recommended: Linda Hutcheon and Gary R. Bortolotti, “On the Origin of Adaptations: Rethinking Fidelity Discourse and “Success” Biologically,” <i>New Literary History</i>, vol. 38, issue 3, 2007, 443-458.</p>	<p><i>Adaptation</i> (Dir. Spike Jonse, 2002, written by Charlie Kaufman, 114 min.)</p>
Wk 2 Jan 24-28	<p>New and Old Approaches to Adaptation</p> <p>Adaptation/Appropriation Original/Copy Fidelity/Betrayal</p> <p>New modes of authorship, production, marketing, and consumption Internet fan clubs, online producer-consumer affiliations, and real-world legal controversies over the proprietary ownership of digital bits of information</p>	<p>Leitch, Thomas, “Twelve Fallacies in Contemporary Adaptation Theory,” <i>Criticism</i>, vol. 45. Issue 2, 2003, 149-171.</p> <p>Patricia Nelson, “Fan Protests, Cultural Authenticity, and the Adaptation of Avatar: The Last Airbender,” FLOW TV, Online at: http://flowtv.org/?p=4215</p> <p>Recommended: Shefrin, Elana, “<i>Lord of the Rings, Star Wars, and Participatory Fandom: Mapping New Congruencies between the Internet and Media Entertainment Culture,</i>” <i>Critical Studies in Media Communication</i>, Volume 21, Issue 3 September 2004 , pages 261 – 281.</p> <p>Walter Benjamin, “The Task of the Translator.”</p> <p>Leitch, Thomas, “Adaptation Studies at a Crossroads,” <i>Adaptation</i>, vol. 1, issue 1, pp. 63-77.</p>	<p>Clips related to <i>Avatar</i> (James Cameron, 2009)</p> <p>YouTube video “Asian Culture in the Avatar World” A fan-created video emphasizes <i>Avatar</i>’s authentic “Asian-ness”</p>
Wk 3 Jan 31- Feb. 4	<p>“Metadaptation” Intertextuality Medium Specificity</p>	<p>Voigst-Virchow, Eckart, “Metadaptation: Adaptation and Intermediality - Cock and Bull.” <i>Journal of Adaptation in Film and Performance</i>, Vol. 2, nr. 2, 2009, pp. 137-152.</p>	<p><i>A Cock and Bull Story</i> (Dir. Michael Winterbottom, 2005); [based on Laurence Sterne’s novel <i>Tristram Shandy</i></p>

	Memoir to Film Novel to Film	Heidt, Sarah. J. “ <i>Ca, c’est moi</i> ”: <i>The Diving Bell and the Butterfly</i> as Autobiographical Multitext.” <i>Adaptation</i> , vol. 2, issue 2, 2009, 125-148. Brian McFarlane, “Background, Issues and a New Agenda,” <i>Novel to Film: An Introduction to the Theory of Adaptation</i> 1996, Clarendon Press , Oxford , pp. 3 – 30.	(1759-67)] Or <i>The Diving Bell and the Butterfly</i> (Dir. Julian Schnabel, 2007).
Wk 4 Feb. 7-11	Questions of Genre and Marketability Distinctions between Film and Drama	Leitch, Thomas, “Adaptation, the Genre.” <i>Adaptation</i> , vol.1, no. 2, 2008. pp. 106-120. Hutcheon, Linda. “How? (Audiences).” <i>A Theory of Adaptation</i> . New York: Routledge, 2006. pp. 113-139. Joost Kuurman, Wim van Klaveren and Simon Popma, “An interview with Tom Stoppard,” <i>Critical Essays on Tom Stoppard</i> , ed. Anthony Jenkins (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1990). Excerpts 15-27. Charles Bazerman: “Time in Play and Film: <i>Macbeth</i> and <i>Throne of Blood</i> ,” <i>Literature/Film Quarterly</i> , vol. 5. Issue 5, 1977, 333-37.	<i>Rosencrantz & Guildenstern are Dead</i> (Dir. Stoppard, 1991).
Wk 5 Feb. 14-18	Form, Style and Cinematic Space First Review DUE	Constandinides, Costas. “Adapting the Literature of the Double: Manifestations of Cinematic Forms in <i>Fight Club</i> and <i>Enduring Love</i> .” <i>Journal of Adaptation in Film & Performance</i> , vol. 2, issue 2 (Jul 2009): 95-107.	<i>Fight Club</i> (Dir. David Fincher, 1999). Recommended: <i>Enduring Love</i> (Dir. Roger Michell, 2004)
Wk 6 Feb. 21-25	Comic to Film Adaptations; Main Challenges; Differences in production and reception between the media of comic book art and film	Reynolds, James. “Kill Me Sentiment”: <i>V for Vendetta</i> and Comic to Film Adaptation,” <i>Journal of Adaptation in Film and Performance</i> , vol. 2, no. 2, 2009, pp. 121-136 Scott McCloud, “The Vocabulary of Comics” in his book <i>Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art</i> . Northampton, MA: Tundra, 1993.pp. 24-59 (selections) Recommended: Anon., “Does <i>Watchmen</i> live up to the hype?” in <i>Metro</i> , http://www.metro.co.uk/metrolife/558834-does-watchmen-live-up-to-the-hype .	<i>Persepolis</i> (Dir. Paronnaud and Satrapi, 2007)
Wk 7	Cultural, Social, Historical Adaptations	Greg Hainge. “A tale of (at least) two Hiroshimas:	<i>H Story</i> (Dir. Suwa Nobuhiro, 2000)

Feb. 28- March 4		Nobuhiro Suwa's <i>H Story</i> and Alain Resnais's <i>Hiroshima Mon Amour</i> ." <i>Contemporary French Cinema</i> , vol. 32, issue 2, 2008, 147-174.	Clips from <i>Where or When</i> (Bahman Pour-Azar, 2008) <i>Hamlet Goes Business</i> . (Dir. Aki Kaurismaki, 1987).
Wk 8 March 7-11 <i>Spring Recess</i> <i>March 12-20</i>	Cross Cultural Borrowings and Implications Intercultural Theatre Colonialism and Commodification	Rustom, Bharucha. "Foreign Asia / Foreign Shakespeare: Dissenting Notes on New Asian Interculturality, Postcoloniality, and Recolonization." <i>Theatre Journal</i> , vol. 56, issue 1, 2004, pp. 1-28. Craig Latrell, "After Appropriation," <i>TDR The Drama Review</i> 44.4, 2000, pp. 47-55.	Clips from the films: <i>Omkaara</i> (2006), <i>Maqbool</i> (2003) (<i>Othello</i> and <i>Macbeth</i> in India); <i>A Dream in Hanoi</i> (A Midsummer Night's Dream, 2002)
Wk 9 March 21-25	Televisual Adaptations Industrial practices of Adaptation Localizing global programs; TV formats and national cultures Formats and the Globalization of International Property Rights Second Review Due	Cardwell, Sarah, "Television Adaptations in the Televisual Context," in her <i>Adaptation Revisited: Television and the Classic Novel</i> , 2002, pp. 77-99. Todd Gitlin, <i>Inside Prime Time</i> . Chapter 5: "The Triumph of the Synthetic: Spinoffs, Copies, Recombinant Culture." (U of Calif. P, 2000), pp.62-82. Recommended: Silvio Waisbord, "McTV: Understanding the Global Popularity of Televisions Formats." <i>Television and New Media</i> , 2004: 5, 359-383. Albert Moran, "Makeover on the move: Global Television and Programme Formats," <i>Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies</i> , Volume 22, Issue 4, pp. 459 - 469	<i>YouTube Clips TBA</i>
Wk 10 March 28 April 1	Television Programs Adapted into Films	Leshu Torchin, "Cultural Learnings of <i>Borat</i> Make for Benefit Glorious Study of Documentary." <i>Film and History</i> , vol. 38, issue 1, 2008, pp 53-63. Robert A. Saunders, "Buying into Brand Borat: Kazakhstan's Cautious Embrace of its Unwanted "Son," <i>Slavic Review</i> , Vol. 67, issue 1, Spring 2008, 63-80. Recommended:	<i>Borat</i> (Dir. Larry Charles, 2006). Selections from <i>Da Ali G Show</i> , <i>Bruno</i>

		<p>Wallace, Dickie, “Hyperrealizing ‘Borat’ with the Map of the European ‘Other’” <i>Slavic Review</i>, vol. 67, no. 1, Spring 2008, 35-49.</p> <p>Robert A. Saunders, “<i>Da Ali G Show: Building a Brand as Bamboozler Extraordinaire.</i>” In his book <i>The Many Faces of Sacha Baron Cochen: Politics, Parody, and the Battle over Borat</i>, Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008, pp.33-55.</p>	
Wk 11 April 4-8	<p>Questions of Reception and Authority Who is “entitled” to adaptation? What properties or forces determine the economic value of a given literary property? Why aren’t there <i>auteurs</i> of adaptations?</p>	<p>Mask, Mia, “Beloved: the Adaptation of an American Slave Narrative.” In <i>Literature and Film</i> pp. 272-291.</p> <p>Thomas Leitch, “Hitchcock and His Writers.” In <i>Authorship in Film Adaptation</i>, Ed. Jack Boozer, Austin, U. of Texas P, 2008, pp.63-84.</p>	<p><i>Beloved</i> (Dir. Jonathan Demme, 1998) OR <i>Rear Window</i> (Alfred Hitchcock, 1954)</p>
Wk 12 April 11-15	<p>Europe and Hollywood; Race and Globalization</p> <p>From television miniseries to feature film</p>	<p>Gallagher, Mark, “Traffic/Traffik: Race, Globalization, and Family in Soderbergh’s Remake” In <i>Authorship in Film Adaptation</i>, Ed. Jack Boozer, Austin, U. of Texas P, 2008, pp. 229-252.</p>	<p><i>Traffic</i> (Dir. Steven Soderbergh, 2000)</p>
Wk 13 April 18-22	<p>Questions of Gender and Sexuality</p> <p>Third Review Due</p>	<p>Bliss Cua Lim, “Serial Time: Bluebeard in Stepford” in <i>Literature and Film</i>, pp. 163-90.</p> <p>Aniko Imre, “Twin Pleasures of Feminism: <i>Orlando</i> Meets <i>My Twentieth Century</i>,” <i>Camera Obscura</i>, Volume 18, Number 3, 2003, pp. 176–211.</p> <p>Recommended: Anne Ciecko, “Transgender, Transgenre, and the Transnational: Sally Potter’s <i>Orlando</i>.” <i>Velvet Light Trap</i>, no. 41, 1998, pp. 19–34.</p> <p>Gayatri Gopinath, “Bollywood/Hollywood: Queer Cinematic Representation and the Perils of Translation” in her book <i>Impossible Desires: Queer Diasporas and South Asian Public Cultures</i>. Duke UP, 2005, pp. 93-130.</p>	<p><i>Orlando</i> (Dir. Sally Potter, 1992).</p> <p>Clips from <i>Stepford Wives</i>, dir. Bryan Forbes, 1974)</p>
Wk 14	Groups teach class	Groups assign reading	

April 25-29			
Wk 15 May 2-5	Groups teach class	Groups assign reading	Last week of classes
May 10-14	Group and Self-Evaluations Due		Final EXAM week

Sample themes for group teaching sessions:

- Television adaptations
- Postcolonial adaptations
- Heritage culture
- Reality Television Global Formats
- Adapting the literature of the double
- Historical adaptations; Victorian Adaptations
- Authorship Disputes/Collaboration issues
(eg. Stanley Kubrick and Douglas Sirk when making *Spartacus*, the fight between “the serious dramatist” Brecht and “the thrill-seeking filmmaker” Fritz Lang when they worked together in Hollywood; Hitchcock and his female collaborators
- Auteur theory
- Different Contexts and Adaptations of a Work
- The Fetishization of History
- Documentaries (on the adaptation of a work)
- Gender, sexuality, ethnicity
- Adaptations for Children
- “Impossible” adaptations
- Adaptation and Video Games

Further Readings: TBA

Important Notes:

Disability: If you have a diagnosed learning or other disability, please let me know early in the semester so that we can work towards accommodating the classroom to your needs. You are required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester and turn in their verification to me. DSP is xxx, hrs 8:30-5:00 M-F, ph# xxxxxxxxx.

Academic Integrity: Papers should be turned in on time. We expect the highest level of integrity from the students in this class. Plagiarism, the use of the same paper or parts of a paper for more than one class, or the submission of a paper or parts of thereof authored by someone other than you will result in a failing grade and a report to the Office of Student Conduct.