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Class Sessions: Monday and Wednesday, 6 - 9:30 pm
Classroom: SEM II -B1105

Program Website: <http://blogs.evergreen.edu/adaptation/>

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

“The great mystery of adaptation is that true fidelity can only be achieved through lavish promiscuity”—David Hare

We experience adaptation in every medium—stories resonate and reappear, moving from novel, newspaper, or historical event to screenplay and feature film, from poem or painting to play, from folk tale to opera, from myth to fairy tale to symphony or ballet or animated film—the ways we adapt the stories we tell are endless. Why do we return to some tale, image, or myth and what is involved in altering its form yet preserving its essence from one medium to another? What conventions, for example, are appropriate to a novel but are completely out of place on the stage? What role does technology play in adaptation?

Following on our winter quarter focus on “forbidden knowledge,” *The Art of Adaptation* moves to the ways we use and adapt mythic themes in works situated in contemporary life. As cultural critic Asa Berger has noted, “Myths are the instruments by which we continually struggle to make our experience intelligible to ourselves.” Hence, we will explore adaptation in relation to foundational myths, cultural myths, stories that deal with the fundamental aspects of the human condition, love and death. We’ll examine how modern concepts of time and space have reshaped myth in contemporary art forms. Students will be expected to read and observe from a critical stance. They will write focused responses to each piece and participate in seminar, workshop, and lecture activities. Returning students will have the option to engage in adaptation projects, such as producing a work in a medium that fits their vision. Credits will be awarded in literature, film studies and performance studies.

Questions that form the basis of our learning goals include:

- What makes a story or theme timeless? Why do some disappear?
- What is involved in adapting a source into an art form or a story from one art form to another?
- How does form (including genre and convention) influence content and vice versa in the adaptation process?
- How do changes in one art form shape adaptations in another art form? For example, how might conventions in film affect the narrative structure of a contemporary novel?
- In what ways do technology and popular culture influence adaptation?
- How has modern art shaped our perception of and artistic use of myth?

- What can we learn from a literary work that we cannot learn from a film (or other visual medium) and vice versa?
- How does narrative impact the manner in which an art form portrays a story, an idea, a character?
- How does the historical context (time, place, events) in which a story is adapted determine or at least favor the form in which the story reappears?

Required Books

Oedipus the King, translated by Anthony Burgess (ISBN 9780816606672)

Romeo and Juliet, Arden edition (ISBN 0415027535)

Guernica, Dave Boling (ISBN 9781596916371)

Waiting for Godot, Samuel Beckett (ISBN 9780521549387)

Grimm's Fairy Tales, Dover edition (ISBN 0486456560)

Sunday in the Park With George, Stephen Sondheim/James Lapine (ISBN 9781557830685) - this is a book (libretto), not a CD of Sondheim's music

Program Structure and Regular Activities

Most classes will include some combination of full program lecture, workshop, or a seminar on the reading or assigned research.

Lectures are intended to inform you of central concepts, arguments, disciplinary methods and specific content related to the week's readings.

Workshops are designed to facilitate your developing understanding of texts as well as skills of interpretation, analysis and critique. As the work is generative, you will need to collaborate closely with your colleagues.

Seminars will deepen your understanding through close attention to the texts, including identification and interpretation of central and problematic concepts and vocabulary, as well as interpretation and critique of arguments and themes.

Triads: For many of our activities, including seminar response paper work, some workshops, and other aspects of our collaborative work, students will be assigned to a triad that will, in the best of circumstances, remain stable over the quarter. You'll need to make sure that your triad partners have your contact information.

General Expectations

Excellent attendance and full participation on all program activities. If you cannot make a class meeting, you need to let your seminar faculty know in advance—either by phone or e-mail. You'll also need to contact your triad peers so that they can take notes and fill you in on what you missed.

College-level work. Since the program is focused on reading, writing, and critical thinking, you are expected to demonstrate these skills at the college level. Specifically, this means:

- the ability to read, understand, and then summarize texts
- the ability to learn from texts through discussion with others
- the ability to analyze and pursue writing assignments
- the ability to write coherent, focused, correctly punctuated prose
- the ability to develop and defend a thesis
- the ability and commitment to do all of the above reliably

Fifth Week Warnings. We will inform you as early as feasible, and no later than the fifth week, whether you are working at the college level, and if not, what you need to do in order to bring skills to the college level. Email: Susan and Mark will use your Evergreen e-mail exclusively, so make sure you've accessed and check your account.

Library: Every student must have an active Evergreen library account.

Program Requirements

1. Seminar Response Papers. For each seminar, you are to write a brief response paper — one page in length on a topic posed by the faculty. Occasionally you will be asked to write on a topic of your own choosing.

Format: You must write the seminar topic (single-spaced) at the top of your paper.

The rest of your paper will be *double-spaced* with 1" margins on all sides, with a proper header including your name, the date of the seminar, and the program title. Hand written papers will not be accepted.

Your responses will have three components: (a.) thesis statement; (b.) body of the paper; (c.) citations from the text to support your ideas.

(a.) *Thesis statement:* Begin your essay with one sentence that asserts your position about the topic, or answer to the question posed (this is thesis statement).

(b.) *Body of the paper:* illumination of your thesis statement with clear concise prose. The goal is to represent, as faithfully as possible, the topic as it is present in the text itself. Focus on specific passages and details; avoid broad generalizations.

(c.) *Citations:* support your position using citations from the text(s).

Your papers will comprise part of your final portfolio. You should assume that faculty will regularly collect them. ***Late response papers will not be accepted.*** Since their purpose is largely to help you prepare for seminar and to inform that seminar, they can't do that after the fact.

2. Reading Notes. We expect you to take detailed notes on your reading all quarter. This means that you'll need to have a notebook, or section of your binder, dedicated to reading notes. If you take notes on your computer, make sure that you print them and put them into your notebook for reference after each reading (or lecture). Each of us has particular practices that are useful to us, but you can think about including quotations from the reading that seem particularly intriguing or puzzling (include page numbers). You can write questions that come up and to which you might want to return. You can record connections you make between the reading at hand and other texts and ideas. You might also have a section to write down vocabulary that is either new, or used in a way that is unfamiliar. You'll include your reading notes in your portfolio. **Include all handouts in your notebook and bring to every class.**

3. Annotated Bibliography (for those students new to the program). An annotated bibliography is a list of sources pertinent to a specific topic. The researcher (*you*) chooses a topic with faculty approval. "Annotated" means that you provide commentary on each source. In this case you will compile a list of at least 10 sources (adaptations) that were inspired by your chosen topic (typical examples would be *Beauty and the Beast* or *The Illiad*). Following each bibliographic listing, you will provide a *concise* annotation for your reader. This means that you will give your reader, who is someone who may be researching a related project, a one-paragraph description of what she/he can expect to find in this source. When your source has no text--a painting or piece of music, for example--you will create an annotation that summarizes the best critical commentary that you can find along with your own insights. For sources with text you will describe how the source has re-imagined the original using terminology and concepts we've studied in class. Your bibliography will use the correct format--for our purposes, follow MLA conventions—and will be submitted in a one-paragraph proposal for faculty approval. Those students continuing in the program will have the option to do a faculty approved alternative project.

4. Cornell Box. This is a “handmade” response (your adaptation) of a work of art that we have studied. In addition to revealing your understanding of the source material, the box must incorporate two and three-dimensional images that imaginatively capture the form and content of your chosen work. A one-page paper will accompany your box detailing your analytical and creative process.

5. Portfolio. You are required to keep an organized portfolio. It will be checked mid-quarter during a brief meeting with your seminar leader (May 5) and turned in on the last day of class (June 2) in a small expandable file folder. The following sections in the correct order will be included in your portfolio:

1. A draft of your self-evaluation
2. Seminar papers
3. Responses to weekly *study questions* posted on the website
4. Reading notes (focus on key concepts and terminology, how texts relate to program theme, ideas that you glean from your reading. If you tend to write notes in the margins, it may be necessary to transcribe the those notes in for the portfolio)
5. Class notes
6. Annotated bibliography (or alternative faculty-approved assignment)
7. One-page paper that accompanied your Cornell Box
8. Reflection forms

Evaluation

Your evaluation will be based on the following criteria:

- Successful completion of all program requirements including:
- Adherence to the syllabus and agreements in the covenant
- Excellent attendance, preparation for and participation in class and seminar
- The quality of ideas and the writing in your papers and projects
- Demonstration of acceptable understanding of program content and learning goals
- Late assignments may not be accepted or evaluated for credit

Incomplete status will be granted only for reasons of family crisis, illness, or similar documented emergency. Evaluation conferences will be held at the end of the quarter. *Credit is not the same as positive evaluation*. Students receive credit for fulfilling minimum requirements and standards. The evaluation is a statement describing the quality of the student's work. It is possible for a student to receive credit but receive an evaluation that describes poor quality work. It is also possible for a student to attend regularly yet receive no or reduced credit because of unsatisfactory performance.

Play Performance. All students are required to purchase tickets and attend *An Illiad* at the Seattle Repertory Theatre on Saturday, April 24. If you have a conflict on the 24th, you will have to make your own arrangements to see the performance **before** Wednesday, April 28.

Access Services. If you are a student with **disability** who would benefit from support or services to ensure full access to this course, please contact Access Services in Library 2120 in the Student Advising Center, PH: 360-867-6348. In order for your program faculty to make accommodations, we must be informed no later than the second week of the quarter *by the student and in writing from Access Services*.