

Rutgers University—Camden
Freshman Seminar/Comp 101: The Excellent Art of Adaptation, Short Story Into Film
Syllabus: Fall 2007

Instructor: Carla Spataro
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Phone: (267)252-4603 Emergencies Only!
Office: 425
Extension: 6558
Hours: M/W 10:00-11:00, or by appointment

Course Materials:

- Harris, Joanne. *Chocolat*. Penguin
- Harrison, Stephanie, editor. *Adaptations: From Short Story to Big Screen*. Three Rivers Press ISBN—1-4000-5314-5
- Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. Norton Critical Edition ISBN-13: 978-0393970128

Films:

- *Field of Dreams*, dir. Phil Alden Robinson
- *Memento*, dir. Christopher Nolan
- *Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House*, dir. H.C. Potter
- *Ghost World*, dir. Terry Zwigoff
- *Rashomon*, dir. Akira Kurosawa
- *Freaks*, dir. Tod Browning
- *2001: A Space Odyssey*, dir. Stanley Kubrick
- *Nosferatu*, (1929) dir. F.W. Murnau
- *Dracula*, dir. Tod Browning (1931)
- *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, dir. Francis Ford Coppola
- *A Christmas Story*, dir. Bob Clark

Course Description: During the course of this semester we will examine the usually expansive transformation of a great short-story into a great film. We will read a variety of stories from multiple genres and discuss the relative success of both the written and the film version of each story. Book-ending the semester will be the novels *Chocolat* and *Dracula*. If you've never read *Dracula* before I guarantee that it will surprise you. Each week we will examine a new story/film for which you will be expected to write a response paper. The purpose of the response papers is to help you develop a strong thesis for further analysis in your longer essays. Twice during the semester will spend several class periods engaging in peer critique. You will be asked to watch most of the films on your own before the class period during which they will be discussed.

Films: Will be on reserve at the library and I will make every effort to have weekly screenings on the Wednesday before we discuss the film.

Grading Breakdown:

10%--Draft of First Essay
20%--Response Papers

- 20%--First Analytical Essay
- 10%--Draft of Final Essay
- 30%--Final Analytical Essay
- 10%--Portfolio of response papers (300-600 words) and journal entries

Attendance: Being in class is important. No amount of outside studying can make up for missing in-class discussion. More than four absences will result in failure of the course. Missing class can negatively affect a borderline grade. Any serious conflicts or issues which will cause you to miss class should be brought to my attention. If you miss too much of the semester (4 or more weeks), even for legitimate medical reasons, I may have to ask you to withdraw. **Absolutely no cell phones, pagers, headphones—once in class, attention should be focused on class.**

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is unacceptable under any circumstances. If you have any questions regarding how to attribute quoted material, please come see me, or ask about it in class—you may not be the only person wondering how to attribute material.

Due Dates: The only way to turn in a paper is in class on the day the paper is due. All papers should use standard formatting and punctuation, pages numbered and stapled. DO NOT slide the paper under my office door, stick it in my mail box, hand it to the department secretary or email it to me. If for some reason you will not be in class the day an assignment is due, please make arrangements with me PRIOR to your absence to turn in your paper. **Late Assignments:** Papers or other assignments submitted late will have 1/3 of a grade deducted for each weekday (not class period) that passes after the due date. No assignment more than one week late will be accepted.

Course Schedule: (Subject to revision at my discretion)

All assignments are due on the date listed.

Believing is Believing: The Magic of Corn and Chocolate

Wed 9/5 Introduction, Course Outline
 Fri 9/7 Intro discussion to the novel *Chocolat*

Mon 9/10 Further discussion of novel *Chocolat*
 (View Film before Wednesday)

Wed 9/12 Discuss film *Chocolat*
 Fri 9/14 Discuss film *Chocolat*

Mon 9/17 *Chocolat* Response Paper Due
 Introduction: Short Story to Big Screen
 Discussion--“Shoeless Joe Jackson Comes to Iowa” by W. P. Kinsella

Wed 9/19 Discussion--Film: *Field of Dreams*
 Fri 9/21 Comparative Discussion

Who Are You and Where is my House: Tone is Everything

Mon 9/24 “Shoeless Joe Jackson Comes to Iowa”/*Field of Dreams* Response Paper Due

- Discussion--“Momento Mori” by Jonathan Nolan
 Wed 9/26 Discussion—Film: *Momento*
 Fri 9/28 Comparative Discussion
- Mon 10/1 “Momento Mori”/*Momento* Response Paper Due
 Discussion—“Mr. Blandings Builds His Castle”
 Wed 10/3 Discussion—*Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House*
 Fri 10/5 Comparative Discussion
- Mon 10/8 “Mr. Blandings”/*Mr. Blandings* Response Paper Due
 Peer Critique Session
 Wed 10/10 Peer Critique Session
 Fri 10/12 No Class—Individual Conferences

A Picture Says it All: From Many Points of View

- Mon 10/15 **First Draft of First Analysis Paper Due**
 Discussion—“Ghost World” by Daniel Clowes
 Wed 10/17 Discussion of Film: *Ghost World*
 Fri 10/19 Comparative Discussion
- Mon 10/22 “Ghost World”/*Ghost World* Response Paper Due
 Discussion--“In a Grove” by Ryunosuke Akutagawa
 Wed 10/24 Discussion—Film: *Rashomon*
 Fri 10/26 Comparative Discussion

Pushing the Limits: Freaks and Aliens

- Mon 10/29 **First Analysis Paper Due**
No Formal Response Paper Due for “In a Grove”/*Rashomon*
 Discussion--“Spurs” by Tod Robbins
 Wed 10/31 Discussion—Film: *Freaks*
 Fri 11/2 Comparative Discussion
- Mon 11/5 “Spurs”/*Freaks* Response Paper Due
 Discussion—“The Sentinel” by Arthur C. Clarke
 Wed 11/7 Discussion--Film: *2001: A Space Odyssey*
 Fri 11/9 Comparative Discussion

Children of the Night: Three Variations

- Mon 11/12 “The Sentinel”/*2001: A Space Odyssey* Response paper due
 Introduction: *Dracula*
 Wed 11/14 Discussion--*Dracula*
 Fri 11/16 Discussion—*Dracula/Dracula’s Guest*
- Mon 11/19 In Class—Film: *Nosferatu*
 Wed 11/21—THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY
 Fri 11/23—THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Mon 11/26 Discussion—Film: *Dracula* (Tod Browning, 1932)
Wed 11/28 Discussion—Film: *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, Francis Ford Coppola
Fri 11/30 Comparative Discussion

“You’ll Shoot Your Eye Out!”

Mon 12/3 **First Draft of Final Paper Due**
Peer Critique Session

Wed 12/5 Peer Critique Session

Fri 12/7 “Red Ryder Nails the Hammond Kid” by Jean Shepard

Mon 12/10 Discussion—Film: *A Christmas Story*

Wed 12/12 Comparative Discussion—Final Questions—No Response Paper Due

Fri 12/14 **Final Paper Due & Portfolio Due**—course evaluation