English 3365.001
Adaptation: Literature and Film

Instructor: Steve Marsden
Class Hours: MWF, 11:00-11:50
Classroom: F 183 and online via Zoom
Department: English and Creative Writing
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Email: marsdensj@sfasu.edu ENG365 in subject line (don’t send from d2l)
Office Hours: M, W, F 12:15-1:15, R 11:00-12:00 and by appointment. Email for link
Webpage: http://d2l.sfasu.edu – check it daily

Course Description and Objectives
According to the course description, ENG 365 is:
Adaptation: Literature and Film

Investigation of many of the current theories of adaptation. Students will learn the terminology necessary to discuss film and literature, will analyze literary and filmic texts and will grapple with several current strands of sophisticated (and sometimes difficult) film and narrative theory.

Course Outcomes
By the end of the semester, you should be able to:

- Learn the narratological vocabulary for the analysis of written and film narrative, and be able to write accurate analyses of texts and films using that vocabulary
- Demonstrate your understanding of the opportunities and limitations of filmic and literary art, and their differing relationships with the reader or viewer.
- Demonstrate your familiarity with the adaptation relationship in its many permutations, and recognize the positions of important theorists
- Demonstrate your understanding of the adaptation process, and the roles of audience, media, money, and culture in making adaptation decisions
- Use appropriate research skills to produce a high-quality scholarly or literary-critical paper, or theoretical apparatus explaining your own creative adaptation

These will fulfill the following outcomes for the English Major

Program Outcomes
This course should help serve the following official outcomes for the English major and minor:
- The student will demonstrate the ability to read complex texts, closely and accurately.
• The student will demonstrate the ability to comprehend both traditional and contemporary schools/methods of critical theory and apply them to literary texts to generate relevant interpretations.

• The student will demonstrate ability to effectively conduct literary research.

• The student will demonstrate the ability to write clear, grammatically correct prose for a variety of purposes in regards to literary [or film] analysis.

Credit Hour Justification:

ENGL 3365 (3 credits) typically meets three times each week in 50-minute segments for 15 weeks, and also meets for a 2-hour final examination. Students are expected to complete a significant amount of reading of theoretical and literary texts and watch one or more films weekly outside of class. The weekly reading will be accompanied by such assignments as in-class and out-of-class writing. The amount of writing will average between 18-26 pages over the semester and will, at times, require substantial research. The required outside of class workload will average 6 hours per week.

Required Textbooks

Alcott, Louisa May. Little Women. (Any edition or online—I ordered one with some extras)
Chandler, Raymond. The Big Sleep. (Any edition will do—I ordered an Annotated version).
Lansdale, Joe. Cold in July. Tachyon, 2018. (Can probably get this at the Bosslight downtown.)
Shakespeare, William. TBA. (We’ll pick a play and a couple of versions as a group—there’s a lot to choose from)

(If we have time) Kirby, Jack, and Joel Simon. Captain America Comics, number 1, Marvel, 1941. (Available online)
I’m also tempted by Whitehead, Colson. The Underground Railroad. But it’s the adaptation’s a miniseries, so probably too big an ask. We’ll figure it out.

Recommended Textbooks
Leitch, Thomas. Film Adaptation and Its Discontents; From Gone with the Wind to The Passion of the Christ. Johns Hopkins UP, 2007. I’ll hand out parts of this and other things on D2L, but the whole thing is pretty useful. If you’re interested in the theoretical end of the course, I’ll have further recommendations later in the course.
Some works, including extensive theoretical works, may also be assigned through online copies on D2L or as links. You may find it useful to print these out or access them via a portable device for classroom purposes. Background information will frequently be provided in the form of web links or handouts: you’re responsible for reading and keeping up with these.

**Required Film Viewing**
We will be watching one or more film versions of each work we read. Viewings will take place outside usual class time. If student interest exists, we will schedule an in-person viewing once a week in the evening. Films will also be securely streamed at a particular time for those who cannot attend screenings. Some films will be placed on 4 hour reserve at the library.

Some films may be available on YouTube, Hulu+, Amazon instant view, or Netflix for those who find that more convenient—all of them should be available for online purchase or rental somewhere. You are responsible for having watched the films when they are assigned, and coming to class able to discuss them.

**Course Policies**

**Phones**
If you have a cell phone, please turn it off during our course unless you’re looking something up at the request of the instructor. If you must receive calls due to some developing emergency, please set the phone to a silent setting. If you must talk on your phone due to some earth-shattering emergency, please leave our classroom to do so.

**Eating, Drinking, Sleeping and So On**
Feel free to drink coffee or eat anything that’s not loud, messy, and/or smelly. Please clean up after yourself, however. If you sleep in class, you will be woken up. At least feigning attention and interest is very important for the dynamics of the class.

**Reading, Participation, and Note Taking**
This course is reading (and viewing) intensive, and some of the works we will be studying will be quite difficult. Budget your time and read ahead when necessary. Take notes as you read and write out questions about your reading for use in class. Mark up your books. Reread when necessary. Talk about your reading outside of class. Ask questions in class. If you find anything particularly impenetrable and need help, feel free to drop by my office hours to chat about it. My job is to help you understand this stuff.

This course is taught largely as a dialogue--I ask and answer questions. The students who get the most out of the class are those who participate well in class discussion. If you can answer, do.

**Contact by Email**
Correspondence relating to this course must use your sfasu email account. Do not send using the D2L mail system. The subject line must be ENG 3265. I am not certain to respond to emails with any other subject line, especially if they resemble spam. I never accept assignments by email without previous permission.

**Plagiarism**
I take plagiarism very seriously. According to SFASU Policies and Procedures:

> Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a
better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit.

Please read the complete policy at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp

If a student’s paper contains plagiarized material, the student will meet with me, and I will determine the outcome, which typically involve penalties from an un-revisable zero on the paper to an F for the course. In addition, an Academic Dishonesty Form will be filed. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, or fear you may not have properly cited something, please talk to me immediately.

**Attendance and Absences**

Regular attendance is required for success in this course. Lectures and discussions will highlight what sorts of things will be on the tests, there may be short writing assignments and frequent reading quizzes will be given at the beginning or the end of classes. Please arrive on time. No homework or in-class assignments may be made up unless your absence is excused or has been pre-arranged with me at least a full day in advance. If you miss a class for a university-excused reason, you must (by the second day you return to class) present me with a typed memo giving the date of and explaining the reason for your absence, and you should attach any documentation (such as a note from your doctor) to this memo.

Regardless of the reason for your absence, you are responsible for all information and work covered in class. If you missed homework or in-class assignments during an excused absence, it is your responsibility to find out what you’ve missed and arrange with me to make it up.

After four unexcused absences, every additional unexcused absence will result in a deduction of 5 percentage points from your total grade. Usually, that total will already be quite low due to missed quizzes and poor test preparation.

In accordance with university policy, after nine absences (the equivalent of three weeks of missed class) for any reason whatsoever, you will automatically fail the class. Please keep an eye on your absences.

**Make-up Exams**

Please contact me as soon as possible after you've missed an exam for an excusable reason, and we will make some sort of arrangement for an alternate exam. This may not be the same as the general exam.

**Late Papers and Free Homework Late**

Each student has one (1) free late homework assignment: to use it, write “Oops” clearly at the top of the completed assignment and turn it in within one week of the assigned due date (and before the last day of class). Other than this “oops” assignment, no late homework will be accepted without a university-approved absence or a very compelling excuse (my judgment) in writing, detailing your reasons and providing evidence as necessary.
Major papers turned in after the beginning of the class period on which they are due will be considered late, and will have one full letter grade (10 percentage points) deducted from their final grade. Another full letter grade will be deducted for each weekday that passes. The easiest way to receive a very poor grade in this course is to turn things in late. Do not turn in papers under my office door or with office staff without arranging it with me in advance via email. I am not responsible for the loss of papers turned in that way, or your subsequently lower grade.

Some papers may require an online submission via D2L and some drafting may occur via the D2L discussion boards.

**Extra Credit**
Several times during the semester, I will announce extra credit assignments. Extra credit will only be assigned in class (it will not be posted on the website). Please do not ask me for individual extra credit. Any extra credit assignments I given will be applied to the homework/quiz score, and will be offered to everyone. With extra credit, the daily work score will top at 100%.

**Accommodations for Disabilities**
According to the University:

To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.

**Mental Health and Wellness**

SFA values students’ mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. SFA provides a variety of resources to support students' mental health and wellness. Many of these resources are free, and all of them are confidential.

**On-campus Resources:**

**SFA Counseling Services** [www.sfasu.edu/counselingservices](http://www.sfasu.edu/counselingservices) Rusk Building, 3rd Floor 936.468.2401

**SFA Human Services Counseling Clinic** [www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp) Human Services, Room 202 936.468.1041

**Crisis Resources:**
Burke 24-hour crisis line: 1.800.392.8343
Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1.800.273.TALK (8255)
Crisis Text Line: Text HELLO to 741-741

**Assignments and Grade Determination**
**Grade Breakdown**
Quizzes, written responses, discussion prep, d2l quizzes or posting: 15%
Adaptation paper on a single scene: 20%
Midterm exam over terms: 15%
Proposal of paper or adaptation: 5%
Researched paper OR Adaptation treatment and script: 25%
Final Exam: 20%

**Percentage Grade**
90-100 A
80-89 B
70-79 C
60-69 D
0-59 F

**Tests**
There will be two exams in this class, which will either be taken in class or on D2L. The midterm exam will consist primarily of narratological and cinematographic terminology. The final exam will be a take-home essay.

**Short Responses**
Often, I'll have you write some relatively informal response to the readings for a day. These should be about a page in length, should be typed, and will have other requirements as posted. Some may be placed on D2L discussion boards in order to start commentary. The intention is to get you thinking and recording what you think about the works, and to prepare you for class.

5 = Excellent, flawless: Very insightful, and otherwise dazzlingly good. I think "wow! I wonder if I can get a copy to teach with next semester!" This is a rare score.
4.5 = Very good: Accomplishes everything needed with style and economy, reflects a strong understanding of the subject matter, and has no very significant errors. I think "good!"
4 = Good: Does the work expected, and contains only errors that might be expected of the average careful student at this point in the semester. I think "okay!"
3.5 = Needs some work: Ideas may be incomplete or unfocused, organization may be sloppy. May be "off" in tone or style. I think "well, okay, I guess."
3 = Needs a lot of work: May be unclear in spots, or have numerous, embarrassing, or unprofessional errors. I think "well, maybe next time."
2 = Unacceptable: Fails to accomplish some aspect of the assignment, or has a variety of unprofessional errors. I think "maybe he or she had a high fever or something."
1 = Token effort: Wrong assignment or shows very little work. Accomplishes little of what the assignment asks. Reflects a fundamental misunderstanding of the assignment or a deficit of effort or skill. I think "why did I ever get into this line of work?" A paper with a name on it and a sentence, turned in on time.
0 = Didn't turn paper in: I think "hmm, I wonder if he or she has dropped the course?"

**Reading Quizzes**
Often, at the beginning or end of the class period, I will ask one question, answerable by one well-constructed sentence, about something we've read or watched. They will be graded on a three point scale, as follows:

0 You weren't there to take the quiz or didn't put your name on it.
1 You have your name on the paper, and what you have written is indeed a
The head-notes and author notes are fair game for these questions. I don't intend these to be hard or trick questions, but they will require that you read and remember what you have read. If you have an excused absence on a day when we have a reading quiz, you must bring a memo to me within two class periods explaining your absence and providing what documentation is possible. Then I will ask you another question about that day's reading. If you come in late and don't turn in a signed paper, or you have an unexcused absence and miss a quiz, you will receive a 0.

Online Quizzes
Occasionally, I may give reading quizzes through D2l, which must be completed before class and require that you've read the work or watched the film to answer. These will be open-book quizzes, but will be very difficult to guess.

Adaptation on a Single Scene
You will write a brief adaptation paper looking at how a scene is rendered in an original literary work, and in its film counterpart(s), using careful description and appropriate and accurate terminology. You will highlight the differences in approach and effect, and attempt to motivate the changes. A longer prompt is forthcoming.

Term Paper or Adaptation Proposal
Your term paper proposal will be a brief document (maximum of two pages) explaining the area you plan to work in for your term paper and what you would like to accomplish with it. It will include what works you plan to deal with, and as much explanation about the question you plan to answer, the approach you plan to take, and the themes you plan to engage as you can. It will be graded on mechanics and format, completeness, and rhetorical strength (how you prove to me that the topic will be excellent and you will do it well). You’ll turn it in to turnitin through D2L before class the day it is due.

Term Paper or Adaptation Drafts
Term paper drafts or adaptation drafts will be due on D2L for peer editing at a scheduled time before the final draft due date. These drafts must be relatively complete: they will both serve as homework grades (for bringing them, and for helping other students review theirs), and serve as a required part of the final paper turnin. Papers turned in without drafts reviewed online will suffer a 5% penalty.

Researched Paper
The term paper is a 8-10 page paper. You may go over length if you feel it absolutely necessary, but eight full pages (MLA double-spaced, Times New Roman 12, 1 inch margins, not including the required Works Cited page) are absolutely required. In this rather brief paper, you will write an analysis of an adaptation pair (any book, short story, or play that has been turned into a film) coming up with a thesis and proving it through careful reference to the specifics of the text(s). You must use at least four good, relevant, scholarly outside sources to bolster your argument or to argue against. This paper must do much more than echo our discussion in class—and because of that, if you feel uninspired, it may be better do an adaptation pair we didn’t cover in class. You
will be graded on your analysis, your writing skills, your ability to incorporate quotation and outside evidence, the care and correctness of your concepts and terminology, and your conformity to standards of grammar, punctuation, and format.

**OR**

**Treatment / Partial Script and theoretical introduction**

Students interested in scriptwriting may substitute the researched paper with a script (at least 4 scenes as appropriate) and treatment for an adaptation of a short story not previously adapted. You should also turn in a brief theoretical preface in MLA format, pointing out how you conceive of the relationship between the original work and your script, and providing a few A/B comparisons, pointing out the cleverness of your adaptation and your profound understanding of the original work and the theory and terminology we’ve worked with for the semester. This assignment should show obvious work and understanding comparable with or greater than a 10 page researched paper.

Longer prompts and grading rubrics for all the major written assignments will be handed out in class well in advance of their due dates.

**Important Dates**

Oct. 1 (Monday)—One scene adaptation paper due (online and on paper)
Oct. 17 (Wednesday)—Midterm exam (online, due by midnight)
Oct. 29 (Friday) – Paper or Adaptation Proposal
December 1 (Wednesday) – Draft of Paper or Adaptation due (full draft)
December 3 (Friday) – Final Draft of Paper or Adaptation
December 8 (Wednesday) 12:30pm Final Exam (takehome) due.

**Reading Schedule**

An extremely tentative topic schedule follows below. Expect the schedule to be tuned for reading and viewing speed, time available, and student interest. Daily work, quizzes, and other small assignments are not indicated here, and will be added as the course requires. The time required for each work is a very rough estimate at best, and may be pushed back. I will make an effort to keep the major deadlines in place, and they will never move forward. The daily posts on D2L will be the authoritative source for reading and homework assignments. Theoretical and critical readings will be added from time to time as needed.

**Week 1**

M: Introduction, terminology intro, survey for viewing times
W: The Big Sleep
F Theory essays, narratology terms

*The Big Sleep / The Big Sleep*—Text, POV, tone, plot, masculinity. Noir / Hard Boiled Detective genre

**Week 2**

*Big Sleep* – Versions of *The Big Sleep*, theoretical and background info: Big Issues—Hollywood studio system, casting, auteur theory (Howard Hawks), gender roles, coherence and plot.

**Week 3**

Begin discussion of novel, Portis’ *True Grit*—Genre (Western) and gender.


**Week 4**

Finish *True Grit*, begin “Who Goes There” / *The Thing from Another World*
Week 5
The Thing—go over paper prompt.

Week 6
One-scene adaptation paper due, Monday Sep 27
Finish The Thing versions, begin Little Women

Week 7
Little Women

Week 8:
Howl’s Moving Castle
Midterm Exam (out of class: online exam): Wednesday, October 13

Week 9:
TBD (we’ll vote on a few options)

Week 10:
Shakespeare TBD
Paper or adaptation project proposal: Friday, Oct 29

Week 11:
Shakespeare TBD

Week 12:
Cold in July (or another Lansdale)

Week 13:
Nomadland

Week 14:
Thanksgiving.

Week 15:
Catch up or substitution

Workshop projects online December 1 (Wed.) – Draft of Paper or Adaptation due (full draft)
Final Draft of Paper or Adaptation Project: December 3 (Fri.)
Final Exam (takehome) due before Wednesday, Dec 8 at 12:30am.