

This double-credit class is an introduction to filmic adaptations of American literature. In the first part of our weekly double sessions we will watch the selected movie, and then in the second part will have a discussion, launched by student presentations, of both the book and the movie. While we interpret the individual movies and novels, our discussions will cover serious theoretical issues (the "fidelity" issue, the destabilized "original," adaptation as over-writing and interpretation, etc.) as well.

Films/novels discussed: *Adaptation*, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, *Seize the Day*, *The Ballad of the Sad Cafe*, *Lolita* (two versions), *A Thousand Acres*, *Beloved*, *M. Butterfly*, *The Joy Luck Club*, *The Human Stain*.

Grades will be based on

- (i) one presentation each student is required to give, and
- (ii) an in-class final test.

*Attendance.* It is assumed that everyone will attend the classes. You are required to attend the screenings even if you have seen the movie. Missed classes will show in your grades.

*Reading the assigned texts.* Students are required to come prepared for class: you must read the assigned novels for each class. Actually, you are encouraged to read the assignments twice: once for "fun," once "for class." Not reading the assignments counts into your absences (missed classes) and will show in your grades.

*Visibility, active participation.* Be visible. Mere physical presence, even when you have read the assignments, is not enough: you have to prove your skills in reading, analysis, and argument in class discussions.

*Oral presentation.* Each student is required to give one short oral presentation (max. 5-10 minutes) introducing the novel/movie of that class session. Contextualize your topic as well as the views you cite. Give your sources in your presentation. Conduct scholarly research into the critical literature concerning the book and the film: read books and journal articles (those that have appeared since the 1980s only, if possible), not just the easier internet sources. You are advised not to read your presentation but speak without notes as much as possible.

*In-class final test.* This test will cover all the readings, discussions, and presentations.

## Schedule of Topics and Presentations

September 10            Orientation

September 17            An adaptation without a novel: *Adaptation*

Presentation:

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September 24            Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

Presentation:

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October 1                Saul Bellow, *Seize the Day*

Presentation:

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October 8                Carson McCullers, *The Ballad of the Sad Cafe*

Presentation:

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October 15               Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita* (two versions)

Presentation:

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October 23               No class

October 30               No class

November 6              Jane Smiley, *A Thousand Acres*

Presentation:

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November 13             Toni Morrison, *Beloved*

Presentation:

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November 20             David Hwang, *M. Butterfly*

Presentation:

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November 27  
Presentation:

Philip Roth, *The Human Stain*

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December 4  
Presentation:

In-class final test

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December 11

Grade books signed