English/Film Studies 329 Film and Literature

Special Focus on: Young Adult Adaptation

Summer 2016 June 27-July 23

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Course Description:

Through a focus on contemporary young adult novels and films, this course will explore approaches to the art, theory, and cultural politics of adaptation, even challenging what is meant by the term “adaptation” itself. Through readings and screenings, students will be asked to interrogate these and other questions: Why did they ruin my favorite book? What is the nature of the “literary” and the “cinematic”? Why do so many of the films described as adaptations derive from canonical literature or texts that are popular in their contemporary moment? How do the different media affect the ways in which stories are told? Is the book always “better” than the movie?

To support students in engaging with such questions and in developing and focusing their own theories of adaptation, we will also be reading selected adaptation theory and criticism, including writings by Andre Bazin, Robert Stam, and Judith Mayne.

Notes: These policies are subject to change with due notice. English Department policies on Academic Dishonesty and Grievances are posted on a bulletin board in the west corridor of Curtin 4 and on the English Department homepage.
Primary Texts:

Steven Chbosky  
*The Perks of Being a Wallflower*  
Dir. Steven Chbosky (2012)

John Green  
*The Fault in Our Stars*  
Dir. Josh Boone (2014)

Jodi Picoult  
*My Sister's Keeper*  
Dir. Nick Cassavetes (2009)

You are responsible for obtaining these course books. You also have the responsibility to acquire the required films and watch them on your own time. Films are all easily rentable (via libraries, video stores, Netflix, etc.) or you purchase them if you choose. The screenings are required, so you must make sure that you have the time and technical capacity for viewing. (See the course calendar for dates.)

Additional Texts:

All additional course readings are available online on our course D2L site. I recommend that you save the articles to your computer, so you can have access to them at any time.

Assignments and Grading:

Discussion and Participation: This course relies on the active and engaged participation of all students. We will spend the majority of our time during the course discussing readings and screenings. Your consistent engagement will result in more complete and intelligent understanding of the material, and therefore, greater success in the course. For this part of the course, you will write the equivalent of roughly 3-4 pages per unit in the discussions forums. This is the reason why discussion and participation is worth 45% of your semester grade. Please read the posted handouts "Discussion Guidelines" and "Assessment Rubric" (under "Content") for details about how our conversations will work and what is expected of you (and what you can expect from me). All posts are due by 10pm unless otherwise noted. Your groups will remain constant throughout the term unless otherwise noted.

Essays: The three essays will assess your comprehension of the theories, methods, trends, histories, and styles that will be presented to you through lectures, readings, and screenings.

1) Discussion posts 45% -- Students are expected to participate in discussions and to be sufficiently prepared for every class meeting.

2) Quizzes 10% -- Mostly content.

3) Mini-essays on issues in adaptation (3) 45% -- At the end of every novel/film pair, you will be given a question in which I ask you to integrate the novel, the film, and the theoretical readings we are currently studying. 3-4 pages.