

ENGLISH 498: ADAPTING TEXTS

GROUP PRESENTATION ASSIGNMENT

ASSIGNMENT

Along with one or two classmates, you will analyze an adaptation of *Hamlet*, *Frankenstein*, or *Star Wars* not read or viewed in class. With your partner(s), create a twenty-five-minute presentation that does the following:

- ❖ Provides a brief overview of the adaptation.
- ❖ Discusses the relationship between the adaptation and the source text (focus on one or two specific elements when making this comparison).
- ❖ Compares the adaptation to adaptations read or screened in class (focus on one or two specific elements when making this comparison).
- ❖ Analyzes a sequence from the adaptation (passage, clip, screen shot, etc.).
- ❖ Connects your selected text to adaptation theory.

The group should also provide a handout that lists sources consulted for the presentation. The handout may also include other useful materials (key quotations, images, presentation outline, etc.). The technology available in our classrooms allows for use of PowerPoint; however, students are not required to use the program.

GUIDELINES

- ❖ **Structure the presentation around an argument.** Begin your analysis with a claim about how and why the adaptation interprets the source in a particular manner--the rest of the presentation should offer support for your argument.
- ❖ **Be concise.** You will not have time in class to discuss all aspects of the adaptation you have chosen. Therefore, you need to focus on the most interesting details when making your presentation. The "brief" overview should be very brief (just enough information to understand the gist of the adaptation).
- ❖ **All members of the group must take an equal role in the presentation.** Each group member must be actively involved in discussing the film. Each group member should speak for roughly the same amount of time during the presentation.
- ❖ **Coordinate the presentation with your partner(s).** Each group member should know what the others will cover and when they will cover it.
- ❖ **Remember your audience.** What questions and class discussions will be fresh in their minds? What issues will interest them?
- ❖ **Make the presentation easy to follow.** Your presentation does not have to follow the chronology of the adaptation or source. Rather, your argument should determine the order of your points. Effective presentations will sequence information in a meaningful manner, with each point building upon the previous one and setting up the next. Regardless of how you structure your discussion, you should include basic information: the title of the adaptation you will discuss, your argument, the points you will address, and who will cover each point. Throughout the presentation, use transitional phrases to signal shifts between ideas.

- ❖ **Cite references clearly.** If you summarize, paraphrase, or quote from a source, use signal phrases such as "Boyum persuasively argues." Such phrases allow the audience to differentiate your ideas from those of another critic.
- ❖ **Speak slowly and loudly.** Your audience only has one chance to hear your presentation.
- ❖ **Speak from notes.** Although you may worry that nervousness will erase your memory, do not write out everything you plan to say on paper or on your PowerPoint slides. Effective presentations typically include three elements: an outline and visual aids for the audience, speaker's notes for you, and a handout of supplemental information.
- ❖ **Avoid lacing your speech with "um," "uh," "like," and "you know."** Also refrain from performing the shifty-footed, hand-wringing dance of the terrified orator.
- ❖ **Incorporate visual aids and handouts effectively.** Whether you use clips, PowerPoint, or transparencies, your visual aids should be readable and have a clear connection to the presentation. If you use a presentation outline, be sure that the outline matches your points. If your handout has quotations from the adaptation or other materials you want the audience to review during the presentation, let us know when to look at the information. Remember that visual aids help the audience to follow your points; they do not represent a transcript of your remarks. You want the audience to listen to you rather than tune you out as they read a text-heavy visual aid.
- ❖ **Practice your timing.** Twenty-five minutes is not much time to give a presentation (especially if you are showing film clips). Time your presentation in advance. If you plan to show clips, have them ready in advance (nothing slows a presentation down more than trying to find a particular section on a tape or DVD).
- ❖ **Do your homework and have a backup if you plan to use technology.** Our classroom comes equipped with a projector, VCR, DVD player, and computer hookup, but you must learn how the equipment works before you use it. If you use PowerPoint or an electronic handout, save files in at least two formats (floppy, uploaded to Dante) and bring a transparency or prepare to write on the board if the equipment fails. Most of the time, you won't need to use your backup plan, but having one will decrease your stress.
- ❖ **Conclude effectively.** Before turning to questions, end the presentation with a statement that lets the audience know how the scene advances our thinking about the film. Do not say, "that's all" or "we're done." These statements diminish everything you have said.
- ❖ **Ask and answer questions.** Formulate discussion questions that allow the class to expand upon points introduced in the presentation. Before posing your own questions, remember to take questions from the audience. To prepare for Q & A, write a list of questions your audience will likely ask. Better yet, practice in front of friends and have them question you.
- ❖ **Have fun.** While you need to advance an argument about the adaptation, the format of the presentation is up to you. You may debate the adaptation theory that best illustrates the relationship between adaptation and source, poll audience members during the presentation, perform moments from the adaptation to illustrate points, or incorporate other interactive elements into the presentation.