English 498	Adapting Texts	Spring 2006

Instructor: Kimberlee Gillis-Bridges
Class: TTH, 12:30-2:20 p.m.
Location: Mary Gates 082A/082
Office: Padelford A-305
Phone: 543-4892
Email: kgb@u.washington.edu
Office Hours: TTH, 2:30-3:30, and by appointment
Class Web Page: http://courses.washington.edu/kgb2lit/adaptation

Description

The term "adaptation" describes the translation of a text from one form into another. For some readers, texts lose much in the transition, with adaptations failing to equal their sources' quality. However, in a Darwinian sense, adaptation allows organisms to endure environmental shifts. This alternate view suggests that, in the words of Robert Stam, adaptations "help their source[s] . . . 'survive' . . . changing environments and changing tastes . . ." (3). This class examines the theory and practice of adaptation. Our investigation will move beyond limited comparisons of "good" originals and "bad adaptations." Instead, we will focus on the dialogue between multiple versions of the same story, asking how and why adaptations modify their sources in a particular manner. We will devote the first three quarters of the term to case studies of *Ghost World*, *Hamlet, Frankenstein*, and *Star Wars* to consider how stories adapt to the aesthetic and commercial demands of multiple genres—novels, films, comic books, games and music. In the process, we will read adaptation theory and study the cultural contexts surrounding the source text and its various adaptations. During the last quarter of the term, students will develop their own web-based adaptation projects.

English 497/98G is computer-integrated, with students moving between a wired seminar room and a computer lab during most class meetings. The lab setting allows students to view and offer feedback on their peers' writing, collaborate on group activities, and conduct research. However, computer savvy is not a course prerequisite; students will receive instruction in all technical tools used in the classroom, including web-authoring software.

Course Goals and Methodology

Students in the course work toward several goals: expanding existing textual analysis skills to the study of new genres; drawing on theoretical concepts to explore the dialogue among multiple iterations of a single story; recognizing gaps in current adaptation theory; using research to shape interpretations of texts and contexts; and developing as critical thinkers and writers. Course activities promote active learning, with most class sessions incorporating a mix of discussion, mini-lectures, and group work. The course design—which includes frequent non-graded and graded writing—reflects the importance of writing as a means of learning. Students will write to think through particular questions as well as to articulate what they already know. My role is to provide the tools and resources you will need to advance your own thinking and writing. I will pose questions, design activities to help you think through these questions, and respond to your ideas. Your role is to do the hard work—the critical reading, discussion, and writing. You will analyze texts, generate ideas via writing as well as electronic and face-to-face discussions, develop presentations with your peers, construct written arguments, and use feedback to revise those arguments.

Requirements

Class Participation

As a senior seminar, the course demands extensive student participation. Your questions and interpretations will guide our conversations. Thus, I expect prompt, regular attendance and active participation in discussions of primary texts and supplemental readings. You should come prepared for each class session with assigned readings completed. Plan to ask questions, analyze textual passages or film clips, summarize critical arguments, paraphrase your electronic postings, provide feedback on your peers' work, and contribute to small-group discussions. Know that I may call on you during class, as I want everyone to earn full participation points. Like all skills, speaking in class becomes easier with practice. I do not expect fully polished analyses in class discussion; rather, your contributions represent ideas for further development.

The computer-integrated environment presents the temptation of email and the web; therefore, students must follow basic ground rules in the lab:

- ❖ Students will not type when somebody is addressing the class.
- ❖ Students will not check email or surf the web during class, unless instructed to do so.
- ❖ Students will not reconfigure the computer desktop or download software onto lab machines.

Lack of engagement in class activities, inadequate preparation, and failure to adhere to lab classroom rules will substantially lower your participation grade for the course.

Electronic Postings

Students will use the class discussion board to post essay proposals and responses to primary texts and adaptation theory. Early in the quarter, I will distribute guidelines for essay proposal postings. For each response posting, I will pose specific questions about course texts and adaptation theory. In a 250- to 350-word posting, you may address one of my questions, or introduce another point. Feel free to engage your classmates' ideas as you write. The electronic postings allow us to extend class conversations, raise issues for in-class discussions, and present ideas-in-progress for feedback. Your postings receive points on a credit/no credit basis, with full points granted to on-time postings that meet the length requirement and demonstrate serious engagement with the discussion questions or proposal guidelines.

To access the electronic posting board, go to the course web site, click on "E-Post," and follow the instructions. I have divided the class into two groups to keep the discussion manageable:

- ❖ Group One: Students with last names A through Ki
- ❖ Group Two: Students with last names Kj through Z

presentations

Over the course of the quarter, you will do two presentations, both of which require extracurricular reading and research. In an individual ten-minute context presentation, you will provide biographical, historical, literary, industrial, or socio-cultural background for *Hamlet*, *Frankenstein*, or *Star Wars*. In a twenty-five-minute group presentation, you will analyze an adaptation of *Hamlet*, *Frankenstein*, or *Star Wars* not assigned for class. Your individual and group presentations may cover

different texts. Please note that you will not write an essay on the text you discuss in your group presentation.

<u>Essays</u>
Students will complete three four-page case studies that use adaptation theory to analyze an adaptation of one course text. All students will write on *Ghost World*. The other essays will examine adaptations of the two class texts you did not select for your group presentation. I require proposals for each essay; you will receive feedback from classmates and draw on their comments as you compose your paper. You can seek additional feedback from me or consultants at the English Department Writing Center, located in Padelford B-12; the CLUE Writing Center in the Mary Gates Commons; or the Odegaard Writing and Research Center in Odegaard Undergraduate Library.

Although you will turn in all papers electronically via E-Submit, please adhere to MLA format. Your essay should be titled, paginated, and double-spaced, with one-inch margins. In the upper left hand corner of the first page, include your name, the course number, the assignment, and the due date. You may use a 10- or 12-point Arial, Bookman, Century Schoolbook, or Times New Roman font for your papers. Remember to include a Works Cited page with all essays.

Web-based Adaptation Project
In consultation with me, students will develop a web-based adaptation project that extends the work they've done in their essays and presentations or addresses a new text and its adaptations. Some students may write their own adaptations that include critical commentary on why they made particular choices. Others may use adaptation theories to compare multiple adaptations of a single text; still others may attempt to expand adaptation theory by examining types of texts not addressed in current scholarship. The only requirement is that you incorporate adaptation theory discussed in class.

Policies

Lateness Policy
I will not accept late electronic postings or presentations. Late essays and adaptation projects will receive a 10-point deduction per day late, including weekends and holidays. Because receiving and responding to feedback constitutes an essential component of the adaptation project assignment, failure to submit a project proposal or draft will result in a 20-point deduction from the final grade. I will make exceptions to the lateness policy only in cases of documented illness or family emergency.

Technology glitches do not constitute a valid excuse for lateness. To avoid computer problems, you should save frequently while working, and you should back up work saved to a hard drive on disk or your Dante account.   Remember also to avoid storing floppy disks next to cellular phones. To avoid problems submitting documents via E-Submit, make sure to use only alphanumeric characters to name files; otherwise, the program will not accept your file. If the posting board or E-Submit breaks down, email your work directly to me.

Plagiarism Policy
In your electronic postings, essays, presentations, and project, you may draw upon the ideas and words of other writers. However, you must make clear to your audience that you are incorporating another's work by placing quotation marks around exact words and citing the author's name whenever you quote, summarize or paraphrase. Failure to credit sources may result in a failing grade for the assignment, a failing grade for the course, or expulsion from the university. The course links page contains information on when and how to cite sources.

Email and Access to Course Web Site
You must have a UW Net ID, a working email account and a way to access the course web site. I frequently upload schedule changes, film clips, assignment guidelines, and grading criteria to the web site. The site also contains links and sample papers not distributed in class.

Texts

Films
I've scheduled afternoon screenings of all course films except for *Ghost World.* Course films are on reserve at the Odegaard Media Library under "English 497G." While you cannot check out reserve films, you may view them at the Media Library.

Frankenstein. The Legacy Collection. Dir. James Whale. Perf. Boris Karloff, Colin Clive, John Boles, and Mae Clark. 1931. Universal, 2004.

Ghost World. Dir. Terry Zwigoff. Perf. Thora Birch, Scarlett Johansson, and Steve Buscemi. 2001. MGM Home Entertainment, 2002.

Hamlet Goes Business. Dir. Aki Kaurismäki. Perfs. Pirkka-Pekka Petlius, Esko Salminen, Kati Outinen, Elina Salo. Villealfa Filmproduction Oy, 1987.

Star Wars. Dir. George Lucas. Perf. Mark Hamill, Harrison Ford, Carrie Fisher, and Alec Guinness. 1977. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2000.

Textbooks
Course textbooks are available at University Bookstore, unless otherwise noted. I've also placed copies of the Clowes, Shakespeare, and Shelley texts on three-day reserve at Odegaard Undergraduate Library

Clowes, Daniel. *Ghost World.* 4th Edition. Seattle: Fantagraphics Books, 2001.

CIC Student Guide. Available online at http://depts.washington.edu/engl/cic/sgonline.

Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet.* Folger Library Edition. Eds. Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine. New York: Washington Square Press, 1992.

Gillis-Bridges, Kimberlee. *Reading Packet: English 498, Adapting Texts.* Available from Professional Copy 'N Print, on the northeast corner of 42nd and the Ave.

Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft. *Frankenstein: The 1818 Text Contexts, Nineteenth-Century Responses, Modern Criticism.* Norton Critical Edition. Ed. J. Paul Hunter. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Star Wars novel/novelization **and** comic book of your choice. Available at the UW Bookstore general text section, Xanadu, and The Dreaming—all located on the Ave.

<u>Reserves</u>
I've placed a sizeable collection of books and films on reserve at Odegaard Undergraduate Library. These resources should prove valuable as you conduct research for your presentations and project. To view the reserve list, go to the course web site and click "Texts."

Other Materials
You must have several reliable ways to bring work from home to lab and vice versa. You may transfer files via Dante, email attachment, IBM-formatted disk, or memory stick. You may purchase a floppy disk in the lab for $1.00. To protect your disk and thus maintain your sanity, store the disk in a plastic carrier and keep the disk away from your cellular phone.

Grading
Grades in English 498 will be computed by points, with 400 points equaling a 4.0, 300 points a 3.0, and so on. If your total falls between grades, I will round up if you score one to five points below the higher grade and round down if you score one to four points above the lower grade. For example, 274 points equals a 2.7 and 275 points a 2.8. Students who score less than 65 points total will receive a 0 for the course, as the UW grading system does not scale grades lower than .7.

Apart from postings, which are graded on a credit/no credit basis, points for each assignment will be awarded based on quality of work submitted. I will distribute grading criteria with all assignments. Each component of the course is worth the following number of points:

- ❖ Class Participation: 40 points
- ❖ Electronic Postings: 80 points
- ❖ Context Presentation: 20 points
- ❖ Group Presentation: 40 points
- ❖ Case Study Essays: 120 points
- ❖ Adaptation Project: 100 points

Schedule

This schedule may be altered at any point in the term at the instructor's discretion. Students must complete readings by the time class meets on the dates indicated. The designation (P) indicates a reading from the course packet. Please note that there are several film screenings outside of class. If you cannot attend the screening, you must view the film on your own.

Date	Activity/Topic	Reading/Film	Due
3/28	Course introduction Lab introduction and student survey Analyzing graphic narratives		
3/29			Posting on *Ghost World* due by 10:00 p.m.
3/30	Discuss McCloud and Clowes, *Ghost World* Conducting research *Ghost World* case study assignment distributed Presentation assignments distributed	McCloud, "The Vocabulary of Comics" and "Time Frames" (P, 1-61); Clowes, *Ghost World*	
4/4	Discuss Zwigoff, *Ghost World*, Mann, "Ghost World," and adaptation theories of Stam and Elliott Presentation sign-ups	Bordwell and Thompson, "Narrative as a Formal System" (P, 62-81); Giannetti, "Photography" (P, 82-94); Stam, "Introduction: The Theory and Practice of Adaptation" (P, 95-146); Elliott, "Novels, Films, and the Word/Image Wars" (P, 146-167); Mann, "Ghost World" (available on course web site); Zwigoff, *Ghost World*	
4/5			Post *Ghost World* case study proposal by 10:00 p.m.

Date	Activity/Topic	Reading/Film	Due
4/6	Writing workshop: *Ghost World* case study proposals		Bring copy of *Ghost World* case study proposal in **two** electronic formats
4/10			*Ghost World* case study due by noon via E-Submit
4/11	Discuss *Hamlet*, Act I	*Hamlet*, Act 1 (5-69), "Shakespeare's *Hamlet*" (xiii-xiv), and "Shakespeare's Life" (xxiv-xxxiii)	Context presentations
4/12			Posting on *Hamlet* due by 10:00 p.m.
4/13	Discuss *Hamlet*, Acts II and III	*Hamlet*, Acts II and III (71-185), "The Cheer and Comfort of Our Eye': *Hamlet* and Surveillance" (311-316)	Context presentations
4/18	Discuss *Hamlet*, Act IV *Hamlet* case study assignment distributed	*Hamlet*, Act IV (187-235); "Speaking the Unspeakable: *Hamlet* and Memory" (316-320); Findlay, "*Hamlet*: A Document in Madness" (P, 168-176)	Context presentations
4/19			Posting on *Hamlet* due by 10:00 p.m.
4/20	Discuss *Hamlet*, Act V	*Hamlet*, Act V (237-287); "'To Tell My Story': Unfinished *Hamlet*"(320-322); "'The Undiscovered Country': *Hamlet* and the Secrets of Death" (323-326);	Context presentations
4/20	2:45-4:15 p.m., MGH 082 Screening: *Hamlet Goes Business* (Kaurismäki, 1987)		

Date	Activity/Topic	Reading/Film	Due
4/25	Discuss *Hamlet Goes Business*, *The Fifteen Minute Hamlet*, Ophelia portraiture, and adaptation theories of Bazin, Cassetti, and Boyum	Kaurismaki, *Hamlet Goes Business*; Stoppard, *The Fifteen Minute Hamlet* (P, 177-184); Young, "The Ophelia Phenomenon" (P, 185-207-223); Ophelia paintings (select five from course web gallery); Bazin, "Adaptation, or the Cinema as Digest" (P, 208-212); Casetti, "Adaptation and Mis-adaptations" (P, 213-223); Boyum, "The Viewer as Reader: Varieties of Interpretation" and "The Filmmaker as Reader: The Question of Fidelity" (P, 224-243)	
4/26			Post *Hamlet* case study essay proposal by 10:00 p.m.
4/27	*Hamlet* adaptation presentations Workshop: *Hamlet* case study proposals		Group adaptation presentations Bring copy of *Hamlet* case study proposal in **two** electronic formats
5/1			*Hamlet* case study due by noon via E-Submit
5/2	Discuss Shelley, *Frankenstein* *Frankenstein* case study assignment distributed	Shelley, *Frankenstein*, Volumes I and II (5-101); Joseph, "The Composition of *Frankenstein*" (157-160); Shelley, "Introduction to *Frankenstein*, Third Edition (1831)" (169-173); Poovey, "'My Hideous Progeny': The Lady and the Monster" (251-261)	Context presentations

Date	Activity/Topic	Reading/Film	Due
5/3			Posting on *Frankenstein* due by 10:00 p.m.
5/4	Discuss Shelley, *Frankenstein*	Shelley, *Frankenstein*, Volume III (103-156); Mellor, "Possessing Nature: The Female in *Frankenstein*" (274-286); Butler, "*Frankenstein* and Radical Science" (302-313)	Context presentations
5/4	2:45-4:00 p.m., MGH 082 Screening: *Frankenstein* (Whale, 1931)		
5/9	Discuss *Frankenstein* adaptations and adaptation theories of Andrew and McFarlane	McFarlane, "Backgrounds, Issues, and a New Agenda" (P, 260-274); Andrew, "Adaptation" (P, 275-279); Schor, "*Frankenstein* and Film" (P, 280-290); Jackson, *Patchwork Girl* (availability TBA)	
5/10			Post *Frankenstein* case study proposal by 10:00 p.m.
5/11	*Frankenstein* adaptation presentations Workshop: *Frankenstein* case study proposals		Group adaptation presentations Bring copy of *Frankenstein* case study proposal in **two** electronic formats
5/11	2:45-5:00 p.m., MGH 082 Screening: *Star Wars* (Lucas, 1977)		
5/15			*Frankenstein* case study due by noon via E-Submit

Date	Activity/Topic	Reading/Film	Due
5/16	Discuss *Star Wars*	Brooker, "Internet Fandom and Continuing Narratives" (P, 275-297)	Context presentations
5/17			Posting on *Star Wars* and adaptations due by 10:00 p.m.
5/18	Discuss *Star Wars* novels/novelizations, and comic books	Selected *Star Wars* novel/novelization and comic book	
5/22			*Star Wars* case study essay due by noon. via E-Submit
5/23	*Star Wars* adaptation presentations Workshop: Web Authoring I		Group adaptation presentations
5/25	Present adaptation project topics and discuss ideas-in-progress Workshop: Web Authoring II		
5/30	Discuss adaptation project proposals Course evaluation		Adaptation project proposal; bring in **two** electronic formats
6/1	Peer review of adaptation project drafts Self assessment		Adaptation project draft; bring in **two** electronic formats
6/8			Adaptation project due by noon; submit URL via E-Submit