

TEXTS AND CONTEXT: ADAPTATION IN CHILDREN'S AND YA LITERATURE

Room: STV 0131

Times: Monday, Wednesday and Friday 11:00-11:50A

Instructor: Meghann Meeusen

Contact Information:

mfmeeus@ilstu.edu/mmeeusen@davenport.edu 586-651-0289

I prefer email as the method to contact me with inquiries regarding class, and I check for messages regularly. Please only use my private phone for dire emergencies and keep in mind I am not always available to answer.

Office Hours: MWF 12pm-12:50pm

I am also available outside of these times by appointment.

TEXT REQUIREMENTS

Required Print Texts:

- *Marvel Wonderful Wizard of Oz* by Scottie Young and Eric Shanower
- *Coraline* by Neil Gaiman
- *Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins
- *Nancy Drew and the Secret of the Old Clock* by Carolyn Keene
- Selections from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and/or *Through the Looking Glass* by Lewis Carroll

Required Films (watched outside of class, group viewing available):

- *Alice in Wonderland* directed by Tim Burton
- *Coraline* directed by Henry Selick
- *The Hunger Games* directed by Gary Ross
- One film based on a picture book by Dr. Seuss (no group viewing)

The following required texts will be available on reserve at the library:

- Seuss: *Horton Hears a Who*, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* OR *Cat in the Hat*
- *Lost and Found* by Shaun Tan OR *Tales from Outer Suburbia* by Shaun Tan

Students will also select several of their readings:

- Self selected fairy tale adaptation—one novel and one other media variant
- Self selected Nancy Drew adaptation

Textbook Note: Additional readings can be accessed online, and other readings will be provided digitally or via handout. In all cases, any edition/version of a text is

acceptable, including digital texts. Listening to books via audio is also encouraged, although a hard copy is necessary for class. Finally, although many materials are available and/or submitted online, some printing is necessary, so please make sure you have the means by which to do so.

COURSE OVERVIEW

In order to consider the nature of texts and their contexts, this section of IDS 121.19 will look at fiction through the lens of adaptation, with a particular emphasis on children's and young adult fiction. Students will interrogate texts as they exist in multiple genres, examining short stories (including picture books) and novels as well as other fiction manifestations in visual media (film, illustration, graphic novels, etc). By examining how a single fiction changes when it moves from one genre to another or is adapted from one medium to another, students can gain a richer understanding of not only the nature of literary texts, but their cultural context and societal influences.

Please be aware that in order to narrow the content of the course further, the majority of texts examined in this section are written for children or young adults. This distinction simply allows us to focus on a more finite grouping of adapted works. This course does not, however, give a foundational overview of children's or adolescent literature, but rather simply uses these texts as the bases of a more general literary study. Major projects and papers, however, may utilize any adapted works, including texts intended for adults.

Finally, in addition to considering texts and their context through the lens of adaptation, one of the primary goals of this course is to interrogate the ways that scholars and readers approach literature and textual productions in a uniquely analytical way. This includes both an attention to the literary meaning, form and value of texts, but also the approach taken by scholars and teachers who study it. Thus, assignments and coursework will ask students to examine the particular ways of thinking demonstrated in those written and spoken genres produced both in and out of the classroom. Students will seek to understand and articulate this unique way that scholars think about texts, as well as how this way of thinking critically can transfer to other settings as well. This course asks students to interrogate the nature of this way of thinking about literature and attempt to identify, describe and articulate it in clear, thoughtful and reflective ways.

OBJECTIVES

Cultural Historic Activity Theoretical Basing

- Students will interrogate the ways that scholars and teachers think, write and speak about literary texts, both producing examples of this unique literary approach and articulating the defining characteristics of such literary discourse in its various forms.
- Students will investigate the common and conflicting trends in how scholars and teachers think about texts, with particular attention to analysis and interpretation.
- Students will demonstrate and reflect on their own use of purposeful writing techniques and rhetorical strategies as fitting with literary conventions.
- Students will prepare for future studies in literature by building foundational skills in literary analysis, criticism and technique.

- Students will explore and articulate explicit and implicit ideologies of texts, studying texts in terms of their social context, with special attention to intertextuality, historical basing and position within contemporary culture.

Inquiry into Adaptation Studies in Children's and YA Texts

- Students will consider how adaptation has changed the face of children's literature studies and how terms like media/genre/mode are made more complicated in a cultural studies approach to texts.
- Students will question how authors may be influenced by the potential for media movement and how texts reflect such influence.
- Students will problematize perceptions of adaptation and retelling as changing in a culture of adaptation increasingly impacted by commercialism and new technologies.
- Students will theorize the problematics of adaptation, and specifically film and graphic novel adaptation, considering how genre and media affect understanding of especially children's texts.
- Students will pay particular attention to the ways that adaptation, genre and multiple mediums affect textual production, reception and consumption.

SEMESTER TOPICS

UNIT ONE: Classics in the Cultural Mind

- Fairy Tales: Gender, Binaries and Power
- Wonderful Wizard of Oz- Female Imagination in Multiple Medias
- Alice in Wonderland- Undoing Nonsense in Illustration and Film
- Gaiman and Genre Bending: Mirror Mask and Coraline

UNIT TWO: Critiquing Contemporary Culture through Converging Medias

- Hungering for Justice? Fandemonium and Marketing Madness
- Simply Seuss? Problematizing Television, Theme Parks and Theme
- Shaun Tan's Genre Subversion: Lost and Found in Outer Suburbia
- Media Complications or Mystery Solved: Nancy Drew for a New Age

ASSIGNMENTS & STUDENT WORK

ASSIGNMENT CONTENT

Individual Writing Project- 40%: Scholars and teachers who study literature write in a variety of ways, utilizing numerous approaches and multiple genres. This project asks students to choose their own approach to writing about literature, purposefully and thoughtfully selecting or creating (and defining) a genre that will demonstrate their understanding of the unique ways that scholars and teachers think about literary texts. This project includes several components: a proposal, an annotated bibliography, the

project and a reflection. Students will also be required to attend a conference outside of class with the instructor regarding their topics.

Portfolio- 40%: Literary scholars think, speak and write about literature in very specific ways. The purpose of the portfolio and report is to interrogate these practices, methods and approaches to literature, so that students might replicate this kind of thinking and transfer this critical consciousness to new situations. To do so, students will produce a variety of written/spoken genres and comment on these texts, attempting to articulate what are the similarities and differences in the ways that literary scholars think about literature. In addition to producing texts and responding to reading, each week students will log participation, then use these materials collectively to produce a final report.

Critical Thinking Log and Final Report- 20%: Throughout the semester, students will complete a “critical thinking log”, which describes the work they’ve done and/or what they’ve learned about this kind of analytical approach. These entries will be brief, but serve to demonstrate the development of an understanding of how scholars, writers and teachers think about literary texts. This log will be checked periodically to make sure students are staying current, with a 5% grade deduction if the log is ever more than one week behind.

Then, after completing their portfolio, students will use this resource to produce a comprehensive report about the ways that scholars think and write about literature. Students will thoroughly annotate and describe the uniquely literary approaches, critical thinking practices and analytical activity of their entries throughout their portfolio, then write a final report which identifies what they have learned about how scholars think about texts.

GRADING / METHOD OF ASSESSMENT

Scores are based on how proficiently the conventions of specific genres are met, as well as whether projects are complete, thoughtful, insightful, detailed, specific and robust. Students are expected to interrogate the ways that scholars think, talk and write about texts and demonstrate an understanding of this unique approach in their own work, then reflect and articulate their understanding of this approach. Methods of assessment for individual projects will be articulated further on assignment handouts and in class discussions. If you ever have any questions about grading, methods of assessment or expectations, please do not hesitate to speak with me, and I would be happy to discuss these elements with you individually.

Please also note that some entries in your portfolio need to be posted on the online (public) course wiki. This includes reviews, critical readings responses, scribe recordings and a discussion board. **In addition to these public posting, students should ALSO include a copy of these entries in the portfolio they submit for grading.** This portfolio may be electronic or printed, but must be organized and contain a table of contents.

GRADING BREAKDOWN

90%-100% A	exceptional, outstanding work
80%-89% B	strong, thoughtful work
70%-79% C	average, complete work
60%-69% D	problematic, sloppy work
59% F	incomplete, careless work

FRIDAY FILM DAYS

As children's and YA film will be an important part of coursework, students will have the opportunity to attend outside of class group viewings on Fridays from approximately 2-4pm. Three of these films will be required class "reading" with corresponding reading responses (Burton's *Alice in Wonderland*, *Coraline* and *Hunger Games*), but attendance at these film viewings is optional, as students may also rent all required films online for independent viewing. Additionally, there will also be viewings of several additional film adaptations that we are not studying as a class, and these may be used for review or compare/conclude portfolio entries.

ATTENDANCE AND LATE WORK

As active participants in an academic community, students must attend class every day. Furthermore, regular attendance is necessary for successful completion of all major assignments. Thus, exceptional attendance will be rewarded by extra credit added final grade (3% for perfect attendance, 2% for only one missed day, 1% for two missed days, 0.5% for three missed days). Excessive absence may also incur grade deductions from the final score. Attendance will be completed via a sign in sheet, and it is students' responsibility to sign in each day to receive extra credit.

If a student must be absent, he/she is responsible for all missed content, including turning in assignments on their given due date. Please demonstrate professionalism by arriving to class on time. Any health conditions that prevent students from regular attendance should be discussed with me at the beginning of the semester.

I do not accept late work. Although I reserve the right to make exceptions to this policy, this is both rare and unlikely, and is only possible after a meeting with me. If you foresee a problem completing an assignment on time, please speak to me **at least 48 hours in advance**, at which time I am far more open to making arrangements.

OTHER PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

Student Conduct: As adults in the academic community, a respectful and appropriate behavior code is expected at all times. However, should this behavior code be broken

by a disruptive or disrespectful student, he/she may be asked to remove him/herself from class for the day. For information on specific behavior expectations, please see the ISU Student Conduct Code.

Furthermore, I expect professional behavior that shows respect to our classroom community. Please arrive to class on time and remain attentive for the entirety of our time together, respecting our shared academic goals with your active participation.

Academic Integrity/Plagiarism: Students are responsible for making themselves aware of and understanding the policies and procedures found in the Student Code of Conduct, including those policies regarding academic dishonesty and plagiarism. Although plagiarism comes in many forms, students are expected above all to produce their own work in an ethical and honest way. Additionally, issues of correct citation and use of resources are crucial to both work as a student and development as a writer, and students are expected to consider carefully these tenets in the production of all class texts. Students should consult with the instructor if they are uncertain about an issue of academic honesty prior to the submission of an assignment.

Students engaging in any level of academic dishonesty or plagiarism will have to meet with the instructor outside of class to discuss academic penalty based on the severity of the offense, which can include a failing grade on the assignment or a failing grade in the entire course.

Accommodations and Students Services: Any student needing to arrange an accommodation for a documented disability should contact Disability Concerns at 350 Fell Hall, 438-5853 (voice), 438-8620 (TTY). I also strive to create a productive classroom environment flexible to all students and individual situations. If you find that there are ways that the class could be better molded to your particular needs, please speak to me, and I would be happy to help navigate a way to work with you.

Life at college can get very complicated. Students sometimes feel overwhelmed, lost, experience anxiety or depression, struggle with relationship difficulties or diminished self-esteem. However, many of these issues can be effectively addressed with a little help. Student Counseling Services (SCS) helps students cope with difficult emotions and life stressors. Student Counseling Services is staffed by experienced, professional psychologists and counselors, who are attuned to the needs of college students. The services are FREE and completely confidential. Find out more at Counseling.IllinoisState.edu or by calling [\(309\) 438-3655](tel:3094383655).

Computers in the Classroom: Although I encourage students to use personal computers in the classroom, once class begins, every student should be actively engaged in class content. Electronic readers may be used for class texts when available as long as the format remains reasonably similar.