Silent Film Adaptations of the Novel
English 344L
Class Unique Number: 34850

Spring 2010
PAR 206
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:30-2:00pm
(Screenings: Mondays 7:00-9:00pm)

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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:00-3:30

I. Description

Hollywood has always relied on classic works of literature for inspiration and for source material. In this course, we will examine film adaptations of classic novels made specifically during the silent era, when the respective languages of literature and film were seemingly at their most distinct and yet still inimitably intertwined. In particular, we will investigate the challenges and implications of translating stories from the textual medium of the novel into what was at that time the purely visual medium of silent film. In addition to looking at the choices and changes made in specific adaptations, we will investigate the ways in which the process of adapting literary works helped to shape the developing visual language of film and influenced still-evolving methods of filmic storytelling. Both borrowing from and defining itself against novelistic technique, the language of film developed by such early directing pioneers as D.W. Griffith, F.W. Murnau, Eric von Stroheim, Buster Keaton and Fritz Lang would prove deeply influenced by each artist's grappling with the stories and storytelling methods of their literary source texts. Actors represented in the course include Mary Pickford, John Barrymore, Lon Chaney, Lillian Gish, Greta Garbo, and Buster Keaton. Most literary texts on the list will be read in extended excerpts chosen for their relevance to the film adaptations; most films (which range in length) will be viewed in totality during weekly screenings, although some will instead be viewed in excerpts during class.

II. Course Requirements:

Class attendance and participation policy:

Attend all scheduled classes and arrive on time

Missed Classes: In the event you must miss a class, you can do so on 3 instances without it affecting your final grade. These 3 missed classes do not need to be excused, but please let me know of your absence as far in advance as possible. Beyond these 3 classes, all absences must be excused. Reasons for excused absences include illness (with doctor's note), team sports or approved activities, and family emergencies. Any unexcused absences beyond the allowed 3 missed classes will lower your final class grade by 1/3 of a letter.

Religious Holy Days: By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Course Readings/Materials:

Please refer to the end of this syllabus for a full list of required course readings

Additional readings and materials may also be provided by the instructor in the form of handouts or electronic attachments throughout the course

Assignments, Assessment, and Evaluation

Term papers and other assignments are due at the start of class on the dates listed in the Tentative Course Schedule unless otherwise rescheduled by the instructor

Unless arrangements for an extension are made in advance with the instructor, late papers or assignments will be marked down 1/3 of a letter for every class period they are late

All assignments and due dates listed are subject to change with notice from the instructor to better suit class development and progression

III. Grading Procedures:

Grades will be based on:

(a) Class Participation/Screening Attendance 15%
(b) Short essay #1 (5 pages) 25%
(c) Short essay #2 (5 pages) 25%
(d) Long essay (8-10 pages) 35%

Participation will be evaluated based on attendance at weekly screenings and frequency of engagement in the classroom discussion. Engagement does not, however, mean verbal expression for its own sake. Active listening and responding to peers are critical components of classroom engagement. There is no particular quota for discussion contributions; rather the expectation is that all students will be continuously engaged in listening and responding to one another's thoughts and opinions.

A list of potential topics for short and long essays will be distributed by the instructor prior to the due date for each assignment. Students are welcome to develop their own paper topics for any of the assigned essays but must receive approval from the instructor for their topic prior to beginning the paper. Papers will be evaluated not only on the quality of the ideas and supporting analysis presented but also on the effectiveness of the organization and communication of those ideas. More specific expectations will be discussed in class at the time that paper topics are distributed. Any student with questions regarding paper expectations should speak individually with the instructor prior to beginning the paper.

For each of the short papers, students will be assigned a revision partner; partners will exchange papers with one another prior to the submission date and provide peer feedback for each other. In

addition, students will be able to select one of the two short papers to revise for a new grade based on instructor feedback and direction, if they so choose.

IV. Other University Notices and Policies

University of Texas Honor Code

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

Documented Disability Statement

Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at (512) 471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (video phone). Faculty are not required to provide accommodations without an official accommodation letter from SSD.

- Please notify me as quickly as possible if the material being presented in class is not accessible (e.g., instructional videos need captioning, course packets are not readable for proper alternative text conversion, etc.).

- Please notify me as early in the semester as possible if disability-related accommodations for field trips are required. Advanced notice will permit the arrangement of accommodations on the given day (e.g., transportation, site accessibility, etc.).

- Contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (video phone) or reference SSD's website for more disability-related information: http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/for_cstudents.php

V. Tentative Course Schedule:

This syllabus represents my current plans and objectives. As we go through the semester, those plans may need to change to enhance the class learning opportunity. Such changes, communicated clearly, are not unusual and should be expected.

Date	Main Topic(s)	Work to do at home **Readings – to be completed before class**	Assignments
T 1/19	Introduction		
TH 1/21	*A Trip to the Moon – 1902*	<u>Primary Readings</u> • Read *From the Earth to the Moon* excerpts - e-book information to be provided by instructor <u>Secondary Readings</u> • Read *Film Adaptation and Its Discontents* – Chapter 2: One-Reel Epics • Read *American Silent Film* – Chapter 1: A Survey • Read *American Silent Film* – Chapter 2: The Beginnings	
M 1/25			Attend *Cabiria* screening
T 1/26	*Cabiria – 1914*	<u>Primary Readings</u> • Read *Salambo* excerpts – e-book information to be provided by instructor <u>Secondary Readings</u> • Read *Film Adaptation and Its Discontents* – Chapter 1: Literature versus Literacy	
TH 1/28	*Intolerance – 1916 (clips)*	<u>Secondary Readings</u> • Read *Film Adaptation and Its Discontents* – Chapter 5: Between Adaptation and Allusion • Read *American Silent Film* – Chapter 3: The Birth of Film Grammar • Read *American Silent Film* – Chapter 6: Intolerance	
M 2/1			Attend *Stella Maris* screening

Date	Main Topic(s)	Work to do at home **Readings – to be completed before class**	Assignments
T 2/2	*Stella Maris – 1918*	Primary Readings • Read *Stella Maris* excerpts - e-book information to be provided by instructor Secondary Readings • Read *American Silent Film* – Chapter 7: Stabilization	
TH 2/4	*Tess of the Storm Country – 1922 (clips)*		
M 2/8			Attend *Broken Blossoms* screening
T 2/9	*Broken Blossoms – 1919*	Primary Readings • Read *Limehouse Nights* excerpts – e-book information to be provided by instructor	
TH 2/11	*Passion of Joan of Arc – 1928 (clips)*	Secondary Readings • Read *Film Adaptation and Its Discontents* – Chapter 12: Based on a True Story	
M 2/15			Attend *Last of the Mohicans* screening
T 2/16	*Last of the Mohicans – 1920*	Primary Readings • Read *Last of the Mohicans* excerpts – e-book information to be provided by instructor Secondary Readings • Read *Film Adaptation and Its Discontents* – Chapter 6: Exceptional Fidelity • Read *American Silent Film* – Chapter 10: The Early Twenties	
TH 2/18	*Ben Hur – 1925 (clips)*	Secondary Readings • Read *American Silent Film* – Chapter 13: Genres (Spectacle, pgs. 212-216)	
M 2/22			Attend *Jekyll and Hyde* screening

Date	Main Topic(s)	Work to do at home **Readings – to be completed before class**	Assignments
T 2/23	*Jekyll and Hyde – 1920*	<u>Primary Readings</u> • Read *Jekyll and Hyde* excerpts – e-book information to be provided by instructor <u>Secondary Readings</u> • Read *Film Adaptation and Its Discontents* – Chapter 7: Traditions of Quality	
TH 2/25	*Oliver Twist – 1922 (clips)*		
M 3/1			Attend *Orphans of the Storm* screening
T 3/2	*Orphans of the Storm – 1921*	<u>Primary Readings</u> • Read *The Two Orphans* excerpts - e-book information to be provided by instructor <u>Secondary Readings</u> • Read *Film Adaptation and Its Discontents* – Chapter 10: The Adapter as Auteur • Read *American Silent Film* – Chapter 11: Griffith in the Twenties	
TH 3/4	*The Sheik – 1921 (clips)*		**Short Paper #1 due**
M 3/8			Attend *Nosferatu* screening
T 3/9	*Nosferatu – 1922*	<u>Primary Readings</u> • Read *Dracula* excerpts – e-book information to be provided by instructor <u>Secondary Readings</u> • Read *American Silent Film* – Chapter 13: Genres (The Horror Film, pgs. 218-221)	
TH 3/11	*The Last Laugh – 1924 (clips), The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari – 1920 (clips)*		
M 3/15			Attend *Greed* screening
T 3/16	*Greed – 1924*	<u>Primary Readings</u> • Read *McTeague* excerpts - e-book information to be provided by instructor	

Date	Main Topic(s)	Work to do at home **Readings – to be completed before class**	Assignments
TH 3/18	*The Wedding March – 1928 (clips)*		
M 3/22			Attend *Sherlock Jr.* screening
T 3/23	*Sherlock Jr. – 1924*	<u>Primary Readings</u> • Read Sherlock Holmes excerpts - e-book information to be provided by instructor <u>Secondary Readings</u> • Read *Film Adaptation and Its Discontents* – Chapter 9: The Hero with a Hundred Faces • Read *American Silent Film* – Chapter 15: Comedy	
TH 3/25	*The General – 1927 (clips)*		
M 3/29			Attend *Phantom of the Opera* screening
T 3/30	*Phantom of the Opera – 1925*	<u>Primary Readings</u> • Read *Phantom of the Opera* excerpts – e-book information to be provided by instructor	
TH 4/1	*Hunchback of Notre Dame – 1923 (clips)*		
M 4/5			Attend *The Joyless Street* screening
T 4/6	*The Joyless Street – 1925*	<u>Primary Readings</u> • Read *The Joyless Street* excerpts – to be provided by instructor	
TH 4/8	*Love – 1927 (clips)*		**Short Paper #2 due**
M 4/12			Attend *Flesh and the Devil* screening

Date	Main Topic(s)	Work to do at home **Readings – to be completed before class**	Assignments
T 4/13	*Flesh and the Devil – 1926*	Primary Readings • Read *The Undying Past* excerpts - e-book information to be provided by instructor Secondary Readings • Read *American Silent Film* – Chapter 12: The Mid 1920s: The New Dominance of the Female Star	
TH 4/15	*It – 1927 (clips)*		
M 4/19			Attend *Metropolis* screening
T 4/20	*Metropolis – 1927*	Primary Readings • Read *Metropolis* excerpts - e-book information to be provided by instructor Secondary Readings • Read *American Silent Film* – Chapter 17: Art Direction and Production Design	
TH 4/22	*Diary of a Lost Girl – 1929 (clips)*		
M 4/26			Attend *The Wind* screening
T 4/27	*The Wind – 1928*	Primary Readings • Read *The Wind* excerpts – to be provided by instructor Secondary Readings • Read *American Silent Film* – Chapter 18: European Influences	
TH 4/29	*The Lodger – 1927 (clips)*		
M 5/3			Attend *The Crowd* screening
T 5/4	*The Crowd – 1928*	Secondary Readings • Read *American Silent Film* – Chapter 16: The Peak Years	
TH 5/6	*Sunrise – 1927 (clips)*		
F 5/14	---	---	**Final Paper due**

VI. Course Readings

Note: All books are available at the University Co-Op

Author	Title	Publisher	©/ Ed.
1. David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson	Film Art: An Introduction with Tutorial CD-ROM	The McGraw-Hill Companies	2006 / 8th Edition
2. William K. Everson	American Silent Film	Da Capo Press	1998
3. Thomas Leitch	Film Adaptation and Its Discontents	Johns Hopkins University Press	2009
4. Timothy Corrigan	A Short Guide to Writing About Film	Pearson Education, Inc.	2010 / 7th Edition

In addition to the books listed above, additional readings and in-class handouts may be provided by the instructor throughout the course, particularly for class periods on which there are no other assigned readings.

Readings from *Film Art* and *A Short Guide to Writing About Film* providing background information on key concepts and terms used in classroom discussions and film analyses will also be assigned throughout the semester based on course progression.