

WRITTEN WITH LIGHTS AND SHADOWS

CRW 5388 Storytelling in Film & Literature — Fall 2016



“Photography
no longer records
stillness.
It perpetuates
the image
of movement.”
—*La Poste*, 1895

CRW 5388 — 17864 Storytelling in Film & Literature

HUDS 213 — Wednesday 6:00PM–8:50PM — August 22–Dec 1, 2016

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Introduction

The first narrative film, *Le Voyage dans la Lune* (Méliès, 1902), was a free adaptation of *From the Earth to the Moon* (Verne, 1865) and *The First Men in the Moon* (Wells, 1901). During the following decades, the cross pollination between films and literature continued, making these two media arguably the most influential of the 20th century. This course will focus on understanding this relationship in terms of their differences—what novels can do that films can’t and vice versa—and what happens during adaptation—what is lost and what gained.

In the first part of this course, we will read a few, selected texts on film theory, as a means to have a basic understanding how films are made, and to give us a basic vocabulary to discuss films. In the second part, we will read novels and watch the re-

spective films based on them. We will focus on how certain narrative techniques proper to each medium change meaning, audience engagement, and, ultimately, create a different experience, even though they are based on the same story. Finally, we will examine other aspects of narrative media, such as the “literariness” of a work of fiction, the structures of meaning, and our understanding of reality.

In the third part of our class, students will “borrow” a narrative technique from film, adapting it to narrative fiction. Using this technique, along with others discussed in the seminar, students will write a short story or a section of a longer work in progress, which will be discussed in the workshop section during the last two weeks. In addition, students are expected to interact with Blackboard for monthly discussions.

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Course Goals

- Give students a set of tools to watch films critically
- Give students a solid ground to compare novels and films
- Help students incorporate narrative devices from film into their own work
- Understand how these two different media create meaning

Required Texts

The following novels and films are required to complete the class assignments and to participate in our discussions. Make sure that you have access to them, or make arrangements to buy them in advance. Short excerpts on film theory will be made available in Blackboard.

Novels

- Jane Austen: *Pride and Prejudice* (ebook)
- Patricia Highsmith: *Carol*
(W.W. Norton & Co. ISBN 978-0-393-35268-9)
- Ian McEwan: *Atonement*
(Vintage ISBN 978-0385721790)
- Kazuo Ishiguro: *Never Let Me Go*
(Vintage ISBN 978-1-4000-7877-6)
- Jhumpa Lahiri: *The Namesake*
(Mariner Books ISBN 978-0618485222)
- Colm Tóibín: *Brooklyn*
(Scribner ISBN 978-1-4391-4895-2)

Films

- Joe Wright: *Pride and Prejudice* (2005)
- Todd Haynes: *Carol* (2015)
- Joe Wright: *Atonement* (2007)
- Mark Romanek: *Never Let Me Go* (2010)
- Mira Nair: *The Namesake* (2006)
- John Crowley: *Brooklyn* (2015)

Suggested Films & Novels

- *Rashomon* by Akutagawa Ryunosuke &
Rashomon by Akira Kurosawa
- “Las babas del diablo” by Julio Cortázar &
Blow-Up by Michelangelo Antonioni
- *2001* by Arthur C. Clark &
2001: A Space Odyssey by Stanley Kubrik
- *A Clockwork Orange* by Anthony Burgess &
A Clockwork Orange by Stanley Kubrik
- *Do Android’s Dream of Electric Sheep?*
by Philip K. Dick & *Bladerunner* by Ridley Scott
- *The Legend of 1900* by Alessandro Baricco &
1900 by Giuseppe Tornatore
- *The Odyssey* by Homer &
O Brother, Where Art Thou? by J. and E. Coen
- “Memento Mori” by Jonathan Nolan &
Memento by Christopher Nolan
- *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy &
The Road by John Hillcoat

Communication Channels

Most of the interaction in this class will happen in class. Nevertheless, if you need help outside the classroom, consider the following options:

- OFFICE HOURS: Wednesdays from 3:00 to 5:00 PM @ Education Building 906. I encourage you to make an appointment. If the posted hours conflict with other classes, contact me.
- BY EMAIL: jdepierola@utep.edu. I reply to emails once a day, at around 8:00PM, in the order in which they were received. Emails received after 8:00PM will be answered the next day.
- If all else fails, call the Creative Writing Department during business hours at (915) 747-5713.



“I don’t want to know movie directors. I don’t want to be close to them. I don’t want to interfere with their work. I don’t want them to interfere with mine.”

–Patricia Highsmith





“Pictures of
perfection make me
sick and wicked.”
— Jeane Austen



Guidelines

- **GENERAL:** As a graduate seminar, there are no lectures in this class; your learning will depend on reading texts, watching films, responding critically to them, and engaging with other students' ideas in the classroom and Blackboard.
- **BLACKBOARD:** You will participate on a discussion board once a month on Blackboard. If you have not used Blackboard before, make sure you complete the tutorial as soon as possible.
- **ATTENDANCE:** Students are expected to attend every class. Given that this is a once a week seminar, students cannot miss more than 2 classes, unless there are provable impediments.
- **PARTICIPATION:** You are expected to participate in class either commenting on the text under discussion or posing relevant questions. Unrelated comments do not count.
- **ASSIGNMENTS:** Assignments should be submitted in a letter-size page, with 1.5" margins, 1.5 line spacing, and a 12 point Roman font (Garamond, Georgia, Palatino). The first page should bear on the upper right corner: name, date, assignment's name, and word count, as follows:
Henry James
October 12, 2016
The Use of Metaphor in *Atonement*
600 words
- The following pages should bear on the upper right corner your last name and page number:
James / 9
- Your fiction piece should be formatted using the guidelines above, with the exception of the right margin, which should be: 2.5". You may print your fiction piece double sided.
- **SUBMISSIONS:** Assignments will be turned in PDF format via email to jdepierola@utep.edu by 3:00PM the day they are due. You may submit your work until 10:00PM of the same day, but it will be considered late, and your grade reduced.
- **IMPORTANT:** We will be reading and producing texts in PDF format. Make sure that your computer has a PDF reader, and that you know how to create PDF files. NOTE: Assignments in other formats are not acceptable.

Assignments

- **PRESENTATION:** Due from Week 2 to Week 13. This is a 15 to 20 minute presentation on one of the novels and films we will discuss. This should be a professional presentation, which uses additional materials and visual aids as needed.
- **CINEMATIC SCENE:** Due Week 3, this assignment requires that you render a short film scene (provided by Week 2) using all the narrative devices at your disposal. It should run from 3 to 7 pages long (≈3,000–3,600 words).
- **CRITICAL RESPONSE:** Due weekly, from Week 1 to 3, this is a concise response to the readings on film theory. It should be at least 600 words.
- **BOOK or FILM REVIEW:** Due on Wednesday of each week, this is a two page (≈600 words) critical assessment of the work, with emphasis on its narrative devices, but also discussing how the work creates meaning.
- **FICTION PIECE:** Due Week 13. From 5 to 15 pages long (≈1,500–4,500 words), this piece could be written for this seminar, or it could be part of a work in progress, but in both cases it should use your cinematic narrative device, as well as at least another one we have discussed in the seminar. This piece will be discussed in the workshop section of the seminar.
- **ESSAY:** Due Week 15, this is a comparative analysis of a novel and a film based on such novel. This essay should discuss in detail—providing significant examples—the main differences between these two versions of the same story. It should be from 10 to 12 pages long (≈3,000–3,600 words).

Program

Week 1—AUG 24

- Kracauer: “Basic Concepts”
- Eisenstein: “The Cinematographic Principle...” & “Dickens, Griffith, and the Film Today”
- CRITICAL RESPONSE

Week 2—AUG 31

- Arijon: *Grammar of the Film Language* (excerpts)
- Villarejo: “The Language of Film”
- Chatman: “What Novels Can Do that Films Can’t...”
- CRITICAL RESPONSE

Week 3—SEP 7

- Andrew: “Adaptation”
- Stam: “The Theory and Practice of Adaptation”
- Hutcheon: “Beginning to Theorize Adaptation”
- CRITICAL RESPONSE
- CINEMATIC SCENE WORKSHOP

Week 4—SEP 14

- Austen: *Pride and Prejudice*
- BOOK REVIEW – BLACKBOARD

Week 5—SEP 21

- Wright: *Pride and Prejudice*
- FILM REVIEW

Week 6—SEP 28

- Highsmith: *Carol*
- BOOK REVIEW

Week 7—OCT 5

- Haynes: *Carol*
- FILM REVIEW

Week 8—OCT 12

- McEwan: *Atonement*
- BOOK REVIEW – BLACKBOARD

Week 9—OCT 19

- Wright: *Atonement*
- FILM REVIEW

Week 10—OCT 26

- Ishiguro: *Never Let Me Go*
- BOOK REVIEW

Week 11—NOV 2

- Romanek: *Never Let Me Go*
- FILM REVIEW

Week 12—NOV 9

- Lahiri: *The Namesake*
- BOOK REVIEW – BLACKBOARD

Week 13—NOV 16

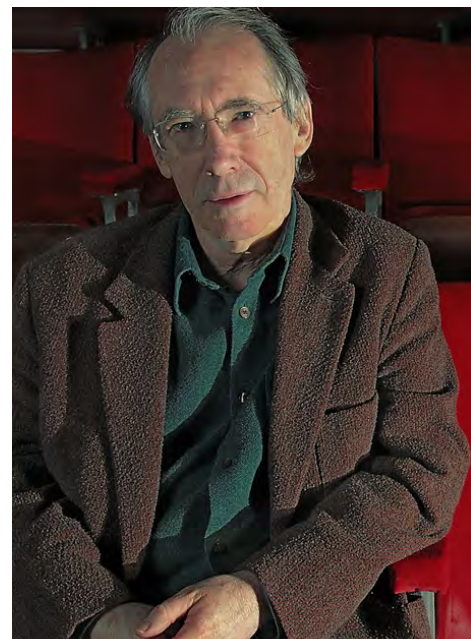
- Nair: *The Namesake*
- FILM REVIEW
- FINAL PAPER PROPOSAL

Week 14—NOV 23

- Workshop
- Toibin: *Brooklyn*
- BOOK REVIEW

Week 15—NOV 30

- Workshop
- Crowley: *Brooklyn*
- FILM REVIEW • FINAL PAPER DUE



“A story was a form of telepathy. By means of inking symbols onto a page, she was able to send thoughts and feelings from her mind to her reader’s. It was magical process, so commonplace that no one stopped to wonder at it.”
—Ian McEwan

Grading Policy

- Responses & Reviews 20%
- Discussion Board 30%
- Cinematic Scene 20%
- Essay on Film & Literature 30%



“When I sit down to write, I don’t think about writing about an idea or a given message. I just try to write a story which is hard enough”
—Jhumpa Lahiri

University Policy Statements

PLAGIARISM & ACADEMIC DISHONESTY STATEMENT

Cheating is unethical and not acceptable. Plagiarism is using information or original wording in a paper without giving credit to the source of that information or wording, and it is also not acceptable. Do not submit work under your name that you did not do yourself. You may not submit work for this class that you did for another class. If you are found to be cheating or plagiarizing, you will be subject to disciplinary action, per UTEP catalog policy. Refer to <http://www.utep.edu/dos/acadintg.htm> for further information.

DISABILITIES STATEMENT: I will make any reasonable accommodations for students with limitations due to disabilities, including learning disabilities. Please, email me during the first two weeks or make an appointment to discuss any special needs you might have. If you have a documented disability and require specific accommodations, you will need to contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services in the East Union Building, Room 106 within the first two weeks of classes. The Center for Accommodations and Support Services can also be reached in the following ways:

WEB: <http://sa.utep.edu>
PHONE: (915)747-5148 VOICE OR TTY
FAX: (915)747-8712
EMAIL: cass@utep.edu