

B.A. (Honours) in Contemporary English Studies

Course Title	: Literature and Adaptation
Course Code	: ENG3274
Recommended Study Year	: 3 rd or 4 th Year
No. of Credits/Term	: 3
Mode of Tuition	: Lecture-tutorial mode
Class Contact Hours	: 2-hour lecture per week 1-hour tutorial per week
Category	: Discipline Elective (Contemporary Literary Strand)
Prerequisite(s)	: Nil
Co-requisite(s)	: Nil
Exclusion(s)	: Nil
Exemption Requirement(s)	: Nil

Brief Course Description

This is a practical course designed to raise awareness of the nature of literature by comparison with other media and to enhance students' oral and visual communication skills. It consists of mainly workshop sessions to develop in students the awareness, skills and motivation to adapt samples of English literary texts into other genres and other media. A key part of the course is to develop in students a practical orientation to understanding the way that texts are constructed by transforming them into other forms and/or other media. The development of language skills under stimulating and creative circumstances is also very important.

Aims

1. to explore the nature of a variety of literary texts and other media in the context of their adaptation from one form to another;
2. to give students practice in writing and speaking (and also acting and performing) in the English language and thereby enhance language awareness and language proficiency;
3. to consider and practice the adaptation of one literary medium into another (e.g. poem into short story);
4. to consider the techniques for translating the literary aspects of representation into the audio and visual media and to practise such techniques (e.g. radio play and short video/film).

Learning Outcomes

On completing the course students will be expected to be able to:

1. Apply simple adaptation concepts to a short piece of creative adaptive writing using individual judgment and imagination;
2. Collaborate creatively and purposefully on the production of short literary adaptations in at least two different media and modes;
3. Reflect on and critically evaluate the processes and outcome of the collaborative and creative project selected in respect of own and peer-group creative adaptation work;

4. Display clear understanding in written commentary on the technical and conceptual aspects of literary adaptation from a theoretical as well as a practical perspective;
5. Demonstrate basic knowledge and critical judgment in relation to a modest number of commercial/ artistic adaptation projects in the context of the globalised consumer market for adapted literary works.

Learning outcomes will be measured by continuous assessment of live presentation, recorded work and cumulative log-book entries, and by regular consultation with groups during the process of devising and developing the various products.

Indicative Contents

A brief review of the theory and a potted history of adaptations with a follow-on discussion of the various types of adaptation: e.g. novel/short story to film; short story to radio drama; poem to song; poem to short story; novel to musical. Examples to be provided by the instructor [2 weeks].

An introduction to adapting a story into a song or a poem, a poem into a song or a poem into a short story. A class exercise in the latter, focusing on the differences between poetic and prose representations. Students to choose a poem or song and to adapt it into a short story. The song *Wuthering Heights* by Kate Bush based on the Emily Bronte novel, which students should read either in the full or an abridged version, will be used as an example. [3 weeks].

An introduction to adapting a short novel into a radio play (with background presentation of a rock musical opera). For instance, students will read H.G. Wells' *War of the Worlds*, listen to the Orson Welles radio version, and listen to Jeff Wayne's CD of the same name (in part narrated by Richard Burton). After an initial lecture and follow-up discussion, students will write a short essay outlining what they see as some of the differences between the versions. In groups, students will then choose a short story and adapt it as a short radio play. The script may be performed in our recording studio (time and interest permitting) and produced either as a tape or a CD. [3 weeks]

An introduction to adapting fiction into film. For instance, students will read and view *Animal Farm* or *The Graduate*. An instructor-led discussion of the nature of the two media will occur, focusing only on a few of the most salient distinctions between written and visual media. Using these few distinctions, the students in groups will adapt a shorter-length short story into a film format. That is to say, they will prepare dialogue, consider the setting, plan the action, and arrange the action into a limited number of shots, (i.e. prepare a simple film script based on samples they will be shown). Time, enthusiasm and ability permitting, students may produce their short film using our TV studio. [5 weeks]

Teaching Method

The whole course will be of a student-centred, workshop nature, with students learning empirically from texts partly chosen by the course-designer and partly chosen by the students themselves. In view of the inevitable pressure on time, the

course instructor will pre-prepare a bundle of appropriate texts for students who are unable to find their own examples.

Much practical work will be done using (subject to the pressures of time and the inclinations of the students) DV cameras, computers, sound tape-recorders. Full use will be made of our state-of-the-art multi-media facilities in the Teaching and Learning Centre (TV and sound recording studios). However, the course is not intended to train students in technical aspects of adaptations and highly polished productions are neither required nor expected. It is very much hoped that students will have the time and the inclination to produce their group work in our studios as this will introduce an element of learning and fun that is likely to prove powerful.

Measurement of Learning Outcomes

Students' progress towards the learning outcomes above will be measured by continuous assessments on the students' engagement with the lectures, workshops, tutorial discussions and brainstorming, readings and written assignments. Performance/ presentation/ screening will provide summative indication of successful outcomes in the area of collaborative process in group assignments.

No.	Assessment Method	Learning Outcome
1	An individual adaptation of a poem into a short story	1
2	One group adaptation of a short story into a radio play script	2
3	One group adaptation of a short story into a radio play script	2, 3
4	A portfolio on the processes of adaptation	3, 4, 5

Assessment

All assessment will be continuous assessment and there will be no examination. In courses like this where there is only one section and one instructor, assessments will be double marked so as to ensure fairness. Samples of student work and marking criteria will be forwarded to External Examiners for their comments. Students will present 4 pieces of work, including a Portfolio, which will highlight reflections by students on the processes of adaptation. Whereas students may produce their group work in our studios, they will be assessed on the written adaptations they produce and not on aspects of performance.

1. An individual adaptation of a poem into a short story [20 marks] Outcome 1;
2. One group adaptation of a short story into a radio play script [30 marks] Outcome 2;
3. One group adaptation of a short story into a radio play script [30 marks] Outcomes 2, 3;
4. A portfolio on the processes of adaptation, including:
 - a log book of all activities undertaken in the course
 - a report on what was learned about the differences between different media (choosing either *The War of the Worlds* and the radio production or *Animal Farm* and the film production)
 - an evaluation of one group production based on feedback from the entire class or from the audience (if any), with a critique of how the production could have been

improved. Outcomes 3, 4, 5.
[20 marks]

Required Readings / Viewing/ Listening

- Bronte, E. *Wuthering Heights*. Any available paperback edition.
Nichols, M. 1968. Feature film of *The Graduate*. DVD.
Orwell, G. *Animal Farm*. Any available paperback edition.
Animated and digitally enhanced feature film versions of *Animal Farm*.
Wayne, Jeff. 1997. *War of the Worlds*. Sony CD Audio.
Webb, C. 1962. *The Graduate*. Any available paperback edition.
Welles, Orson. 1938. *The War of the Worlds*. The Mercury Theatre on the Air, October 30th. Audio tape.
Wells, H.G. 1898 . *The War of the Worlds*. Any available paperback edition.

Recommended Readings

- Cantril, Hadley. 1966. *The Invasion from Mars: a study in the psychology of panic*. Includes the script of the Orson Welles broadcast. New York: Harper & Row.
Enser's Filmed Books and Plays: A List of Books and Plays from which Films have been made, 1928-1991. 1993. Brookfield, Vt., USA: Ashgate.
Friedland, J. 1991. *From Books to Film: A Study Guide*. Learning Links Incorporated.
Gifford, D. 1991. *Books & Plays in Films, 1896-1915: Literary, Theatrical & Artistic Sources of the First Twenty Years of Motion Pictures*. New York: McFarland & Co.
Marill, A. H..1993. *More Theatre: Stage to Screen to Television*. Scarecrow Press.
McFarlane, B. 1996. *Novel to Film: An Introduction to the Theory of Adaptation., 1934-*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
Giddings, R. Selby, K. and Wensley, C. 1990 *Screening the Novel: The Theory and Practice of Literary Dramatization*. London: Macmillan.
Seger, L. 1992. *The Art of Adaptation : Fact & Fiction into Film..* New York: Henry Holt & Co.
Vardac, A. N. 1987. *Stage to Screen: Theatrical Origins of Early Film: David Garrick to D.W. Griffith*. Da Capo Press Incorporated.
Wagner, R. 1975. *The Novel and the Cinema*. London: The Tantivy Press.
Wheeler, David. Ed. 1989. *No, But I Saw the Movie: The Best Short Stories Ever Made Into Film*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.

Important Notes:

- (1) Students are expected to spend a total of 9 hours (i.e. 3 hours of class contact and 6 hours of personal study) per week to achieve the course learning outcomes.
- (2) Students shall be aware of the University regulations about dishonest practice in course work, tests and examinations, and the possible consequences as stipulated in the Regulations Governing University Examinations. In particular, plagiarism, being a kind of dishonest practice, is “the presentation of another person’s work without proper acknowledgement of the source, including exact phrases, or summarised ideas, or even footnotes/citations, whether protected by copyright or not, as the student’s own work”. Students are required to strictly follow university regulations governing academic integrity and honesty.
- (3) Students are required to submit writing assignment(s) using Turnitin.
- (4) To enhance students’ understanding of plagiarism, a mini-course “Online Tutorial on Plagiarism Awareness” is available on <https://pla.ln.edu.hk/>.