

Pittsburg State University
College of Arts and Sciences
Dept. English and Modern Languages

ENGL 120www Literature and Film (fully online)

I'm Dr. Casie Hermansson, and I teach in the English Department at PSU. This is one of my favorite classes and I hope you enjoy it and learn a lot from it. When I learned to "read" film for the first time it felt like I stepped behind "the matrix" and saw how film worked to tell a story. The course has many academic goals, but it is my one hope that you have this experience as well.

Email: chermansson@pittstate.edu (note it is ***not*** a gus email address)

Office: 450 Grubbs Hall

Telephone: 620.235.4037

Office hours XXX and by appointment.

If you are out of town and need to contact me, you can contact me through Canvas, by searching the PSU English Department web page, by calling the English Department or using the PSU main number and operator to connect to my office phone.

Pitt State Pathway Mission Statement:

The *Pitt State Pathway* curriculum serves as the heart of the university education by fostering interdisciplinary competencies that typify the educated person. It is designed to facilitate the development of key proficiencies including communication and information literacy. The *Pitt State Pathway* curriculum provides a transformational experience that challenges students to think creatively and critically, and to immerse themselves in the productive examination of humans in their global setting. By encouraging the development of skills that promote life-long learning, the *Pitt State Pathway* fosters a sense of personal responsibility, an appreciation of diversity, and an understanding of interconnectedness in our truly global society.

Pitt State Pathway Essential Studies Element to be Covered in this Course:

Human Experience within a Global Context

Understanding the diverse nature, meanings, or functions of creative endeavors through the study of literature, music, theater, visual arts, or related forms of expression helps us understand ourselves. Competency in this element means:

- *Applying* cultural concepts and/or methodologies in the analysis of literary, performing, visual, or other art forms;

- *Analyzing* how literature, performance, the visual arts, or other creative endeavors respond to and influence society and culture;
- *Analyzing* creative endeavors in a contextual framework, such as critical theory, aesthetics, philosophy of art, or rhetoric;
- *Demonstrating* concepts that characterize a polycentric view of the world in contrast to an ethnocentric perspective.

Our study of both literature and film and how one art form can be adapted into another means that you are learning multiple cultural concepts (how humans tell stories about the human experience) and methodologies (how literature is constructed, how film is constructed, how adaptation functions).

Neither literature nor film is created in a vacuum. Both forms of expressive media are historically- and culturally-bound in that they are both products of their time, culture, and society, and respond to and comment on those multiple spheres of influence. At the same time, literature and film are public arts and have the potential to influence society and culture.

This course examines literary and cinematic works from a range of historical periods, from both American and international creators. In addition to analyzing literary and cinematic narrative forms, this course teaches that adaptation (and transmedial adaptation) is itself a creative act and a form of commentary that is also historically-, socially-, and culturally-bound.

By definition, adaptation from one work into another work exhibits polycentric points of view and radically disrupts the very idea of a single viewpoint. Adaptation is a conversation between works, between their various creators, and between audiences. Students in Literature and Film not only analyze and discuss multiple examples of this polycentricity but also create (and thereby demonstrate) a number of creative examples of adaptation of their own.

Pitt State Pathway Companion Element to be Covered in this Course:

Diverse Perspectives within a Global Context

Valuing different perspectives and analyzing the interrelationships between them leads to global respect and understanding. Competency in this element means:

- *Applying* multiple perspectives to personal, social, cultural, disciplinary, environmental, race, ethnicity, gender, nationhood, religion, or class interactions;
- *Analyzing* connections between worldviews, power structures, or experiences of multiple cultures in a historical or contemporary context;
- *Analyzing* issues of diversity (i.e. religious, racial, sexual orientations, gender, or disabilities).

The diversity of perspectives in this course is achieved through study of international literature and film examples (such as *Rashomon*, an adaptation of two Japanese short stories, itself giving rise to the so-called “Rashomon effect”—the term for the subjectivity of human experience and memory giving rise to multiple and conflicting perspectives on any single event). Such diversity of perspective is an extension of the focus on adaptation as a dialogue between two or more perspectives.

Learning Outcome: Students will explore global systems conscientiously.

The Learning Outcome Level of this course is: *Milestone II*. Students will be able to:

- **Recognize** that various art forms respond to and influence society and culture;
- **Explain** how various art forms respond to and influence culture;
- **Interpret** how various art forms respond to and influence culture

This learning outcome level is accomplished through multiple and sequenced assignments first asking students to RECOGNIZE through literary and cinematic examples both that these art forms influence society and culture, and to EXPLAIN how they do; inviting students to suggest examples from their own reading and viewing experience in order to EXPLAIN how they respond to and influence culture; to study adaptation as a process that participates in such influence, and to INTERPRET through adaptation’s processes ways in which art forms respond to one another and influence culture.

Methods of Assessment:

Quizzes over assigned reading (may be retaken until passed).

Discussion posts: informal writing designed to engage in a topic and apply it either to assigned films or to films in the student’s own repertoire.

Worksheets and final project: a combination of work styles (long answer, short answer, factual comment, opinion and interpretation, artwork/sketches) designed in some cases to assist understanding and recognition, and in others to provide the means to explain, interpret, and analyze as indicated by the Learning Outcome Level above.

Bio:

I’m a New Zealander. I’ve taught at PSU since 1997 and was a Fulbright Scholar in Finland in 2014. Other classes I teach include British Literature, Technical/Professional Writing, Novel to Film, The Short Story, and various other English electives.

I currently co-direct the interdisciplinary Film and Media Studies Minor at PSU as well (and this course is one of the core courses for the minor). If you enjoy the course and want to know more about the minor check out the page: <http://www.pittstate.edu/departments/english/film-and-media-studies-minor> (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site. .

Course Specifics:

This class is a Pitt State Pathway course. It can also be used for the Women's Studies minor, the Film and Media Studies minor, and if you are an English major or minor you can earn elective credit from it as well.

You are not expected to have prior college experience with literature, or any prior knowledge of film studies at all. This course is an introductory (college) level for both subjects!

This is the syllabus for this course. PSU also has a syllabus supplement for each semester regarding important semester dates which you can find on the Registrar's home page as well.

There is one required textbook BUT NOTE OTHER REQUIREMENTS BELOW:

Adaptation: Studying Literature and Film Desmond and Hawkes (0-07-282204-X) **Required****.

The first chapter is scanned as a pdf file for you so you can complete Module 1 but you must have your textbook thereafter. Not having the textbook will not excuse late work. There is a single copy on 2-hour reserve at Axe library as well.

I have provided pdf files for the required short stories we will all study. You may also be expected to CHOOSE and then LOCATE for yourself additional reading for some of the assignments. Frequently this is available online but you may elect to read something else for the course and you will then need to buy or borrow a copy to read.

There are required films to view and in these cases they are available on youtube (often in pieces). But you will also need to locate FILMS of your own choosing from lists provided in the course. In these cases, you can use whatever sources you can: library, Netflix, hulu, amazon, etc.

For one Module in particular the instructor will make available in Canvas pdf files of academic research articles required for analysis.

****Do NOT email to ask me if the first textbook is really necessary; it is.** Quite apart from the fact that this is an English class and there is a lot of assigned reading, you must have access to it in order to pass the reading quizzes, in order to unlock Modules. I will NOT unlock Modules for you because you do not have the textbook and cannot do the quizzes properly.

On Films Again

Where possible, I have directed you to film content available on youtube. All the early short films are available for viewing there, as well as short excerpts from *The Big Kahuna* (used in the editing section of Unit 1, as an example). It may also be possible to view an entire film on

youtube, where it will be broken into segments. However, the following feature films are used in the class and are also available from instructor reserve at the circulation desk of Axe library. If you are unable or unwilling to see them on campus, you are responsible for obtaining access to them yourself either by purchasing the DVD, or checking to see whether Netflix or your local video stores have them. *You should plan ahead to obtain what you will need.*

Take the tour of the Course!

There are 5 Modules. Not all Modules take equal time.

Module 0: Start here first! (you can complete this Module before you have a textbook. You must complete this Module to proceed.)

Module 1: (3 weeks) Mise en scène and Camerawork (you can complete this Module before you have a textbook also.)

Module 2: (3 weeks) Editing and Sound

Module 3: (4 weeks) Rear Window (“picture in picture”)

Module 4: (3 weeks) Adaptation is Apples to Oranges

Module 5: (3 weeks) Classic and Contemporary (final project)

- *Modules are locked until a certain date.*
- *You can unlock Modules on or after that date AND ONLY by also completing the prerequisites.*
- *See the Module view for prerequisites (under each item in the file it says in gray text: “must view page” or “must contribute content,” “must earn at least 6” etc). These are the prerequisites for completing the Module and they must be done in Canvas. i.e.: emailing me work does not “tell” Canvas that you submitted the assignment; you must upload to Canvas.*

Within **each Module folder in Canvas as relevant** you will find:

- Module Overview: This is your guide to the Module. View and/or print it for reference.
- Module Worksheet (to complete in a different font color and reupload in the Canvas assignment drop box by the due date)
- Quizzes over reading material (not graded but *must pass in order to unlock future Modules*)
- Handouts (printouts) for notes or assignments
- Powerpoints with my audio—usually very brief

When you finish with this page, take a few minutes to complete Module 0. When you then have access to Module 1, print the Module Overview and familiarize yourself with the dates for submissions and work flow.

Academic Honesty

All work you submit, whether formal or informal, graded or not, must be your own work done this semester. You may discuss your work with others, visit the PSU Writing Center in person or online and work with a tutor as many times as you like, but when you put pen to paper, the ideas and words you choose must be **yours**.

If you use the words or ideas of anyone else, including “the internet,” you **must** cite the source of information. **Failure to adequately document borrowed information may result in a zero for the assignment, a required re-take or re-write with grade penalty, or F for the course, at my discretion and as the situation warrants. If you are warned or penalized for academic dishonesty once and then re-offend you can expect to get an earned F for the course at that point.**

In addition to these guidelines, please read the University policy on academic honesty and the Registrar’s semester-specific guide for important dates in the semester (dates for adds and drops, refunds, midterm grades, and so on). These can be found on the Registrar’s page of the PSU website.

Major Assignments and Grading—weighted in Canvas

20% All discussion posts, as assigned

80% Assignments

- Module 1 Worksheet 20%,
- Module 2 Worksheet 20%,
- Module 3 Worksheet 20%,
- *
- Module 5* Worksheet 20%,

**note that Module 4 is assessed only by a graded Discussion post*

Absences

While this is an online course, your participation is necessary. A student can be dropped for excessive absences: for not having logged in over any 14 consecutive day period during the semester; and/or being two or more assignments overdue without a negotiated extension. If you know you are behind in the course and intend to stay active, you must contact me to negotiate an extension. If a student is dropped for excessive absences, the "date of last attendance" reported to the registrar will be the day of last contribution to the course (not the most recent login). For any grade of Incomplete to be assigned at the end of the course, a student must be in good standing to that point, and have completed 3/4 of the course material. Incompletes are only granted in cases of extreme circumstances and must be approved by me.

Attendance policy quick check:

- Log in at least once every 14 days

- Do not fall more than 2 assignments behind without an extension

Late Work

Late work will be grade penalized daily. Work submitted after a week late without a negotiated extension approved by me will not be accepted for a passing grade. Work submitted two weeks or more late can only earn a zero but must still be your own work. All Modules must be completed to pass this course. Do turn in late work, within a week, sooner rather than later.

Late work policy quick check:

- You can turn in work late
- It will be grade penalized daily
- After a week overdue it can only earn an F
- After 2 weeks overdue it can only earn 0

Grade values:

90-100% A; 80-89 B; 70-79 C; 60-69 D; 0-59 F; *grades will not be rounded up.*

Course Code of Conduct / Netiquette

It is expected that in both your written and verbal communication with me and others in the course you will be ***courteous and professional*** at all times, as will I. As in any classroom environment, failure to treat others with respect will result in penalties for ***disruptive behavior*** which may include being dropped from the course with notice. If you are permitted to obtain personal contact information for anyone in the course, whether phone or email, you are expected to use this information courteously and respectfully as well, and to discontinue written or verbal contact with a classmate if asked to do so by myself or the student. In turn, you have the right to request that any student cease to contact you, with cause. Please notify me as soon as possible of any problem so that it can be addressed quickly.

Given that we do not meet face to face for this course, it is imperative that we take extra time and effort to ensure that our written communications with one another are courteous. It is unfortunately too easy to fire off communications that appear terse, angry, or even rude. *Note that all capitals is the equivalent of shouting; do not send emails or write discussion posts in all-caps.*

Also note that writing Discussion posts and emails is NOT texting. Use complete English ("through," not "thru" etc.) and capitalize personal pronouns (I, not i, or i'm, for example). **Submissions and Discussion posts that do not use the conventions of professional written English may be grade penalized.**

Please address all emails and communications to me as Dr. Hermansson. Do include a greeting in all communications (even "Hi" is better than none!).

Online Considerations

You need to be more self-motivated to do well in an online class. Instead of meeting in a classroom where the instructor walks you through material and reminds you of upcoming due dates, you are expected to log in often, read announcements, print off Module Overviews, and work your way independently through checklists, reading assignments, film viewings and related tasks.

I am happy to answer questions, but not questions that could easily be answered by having read the syllabus, Module Overviews, and course content. Please be sure you have done due diligence first, *before* contacting me!