

Literature / Film Adaptation End of Semester Project (2 options)

Due dates:

Proposal and 10 preliminary sources in Evernote: [beginning of Week 8]

Research update and source annotations: [beginning of Week 14]

Rough draft of complete assignment: [beginning of Week 16]

Final Draft: [Last class period]

The Proposal:

Your proposal should, in 2-3 pages:

- Explain which option you're pursuing
- Explain the primary works you are studying or adapting
- Preview your approach or thesis (as best you can) in a very persuasive way: What do you think the relationship is at your current stage of research or what do you think is the primary storyline or focus you will adapt from the short story or comic or whatever. How do you plan to focus your research or adapt material for a multi-track medium like film?
- Pitch the project as worthy of your time: show that you can get it done on time

Meanwhile, in an Evernote folder, you need to come up with

- A bulleted list of questions you're trying to answer to in order to complete the assignment. This should be a part of your composition process, and you can cross out or fill in answers as you go. My goal here is for you to really think of what you want in terms of information, instead of just grabbing a few things as they occur. I'd like you to do really quality research: heck, I'd like you to dominate next year's Undergraduate Research Conference, win awards, get published, and the like, if you're at all interested.
- Evernote clips for at least 10 resources that you think will be helpful. Show me that you have done the necessary research into your primary text (for both options) and the film and the adaptation relationship (for the research paper). I should feel like you completely understand the work to be adapted, and/or you have all the criticism of any importance on the works you plan to study. Again, as you complete your research, keep clipping everything that might be useful.
- Adaptation projects might profitably include sources on the written material and theoretical articles on the adaptation relationship, but also how-tos on scriptwriting, articles on the adaptation process by writers or directors who have adapted similar properties, and the like.

You have the choice of two projects:

A traditional argumentative term paper of 8-10 pages on an adaptation relationship between at least two works. It will argue a particular noteworthy non-obvious thesis that explains the relationship and back it up with the best research available on the issue (including at least one theoretical work on adaptation and the best scholarly or semi-scholarly sources available on the original work, the film, and the relationship between them). This will include an Evernote research folder with the sources you used tagged and annotated (I'll give you a model).

A treatment / partial script and theoretical introduction. A treatment of a short story, graphic novel issue, poem, play, or other work not previously adapted into film. This assignment has three parts:

- **A theoretical preface** in MLA format, pointing out how you conceive of the relationship between the original work and your script, and providing a few A/B comparisons, pointing out the cleverness of your adaptation and your profound understanding of the original work and the theory and terminology we've worked with for the semester. You'll use the best quality sources available to show your understanding of the original work and of the principles of adaptation you plan to employ.
- **A treatment** – or brief narrative that describes the action of the adaptation
- **At least four scenes worth of screenplay** with dialogue and camera direction
- if you wish, you may also include **storyboard** elements (but this is rather out of the line of early proposals, and so, completely optional)

Parts of Research Paper (option 1)

Research Update / Annotated Evernote Source List

- Continue the Evernote research questions, adding new questions (no matter how minor) and noting when you've either answered them, found them unanswerable, or decided they are irrelevant.
- Try to find a DVD of the movie, and a reliable script. In any event, double-check dialogue.
- Look for really relevant adaptation theory material to inform your argument.
- Search using the Academic Search Complete, MLA International Bibliography, Google Scholar, and Google Books (and anything else that seems likely). Look for film-specific databases. If all else fails, find reputable journalistic reviews and blogs that you consider a solid and reliable sources working in depth.
- Do not include encyclopedia entries, Cliff's notes or other online study guides.
- Read and watch, rewatch and reread the works involved until you can refer to their differences in your sleep. Record your insights.
- Look up, Evernote clip, and order sources from scholarly monographs, collections of essays, and peer-reviewed journals, in addition to primary works like script drafts, interviews, commentary tracks / "making of" documentaries, and the like. Reviews (contemporary or later) may be useful for some sorts of assignment. You'll order and review at least a dozen, and use the six or more most applicable to your research in the paper.
- **Write a 1-2 page (MLA, double space, Times New Roman) informal account of your research progress:** what you've found and what you're looking for. Use the first person ("I"), and be informal and direct.
- **Annotate the 10 best sources in your Evernote list.** Let me know, in a paragraph or so at the top of each note:
 - What kind of source is this?
 - Is this a primary or secondary source? (Is it a film, a script, documentation from the film or directly from an author, like interviews, correspondence, memoir, etc) etc., or someone outside's opinion)
 - Is this scholarly / peer reviewed? (Does it have extensive scholarly footnoting, was it published in a non-journalistic / non-commercial academic journal or from an academic press? (Googling for the name of a journal and the word 'submissions' will generally give you a good idea whether it is peer reviewed)
 - Is it contemporary? (Was it written in immediate reaction to the primary work?)

- Who is the audience for this? How do you know?
- What are the author's credentials? (Search carefully, give only the highlights)
- How credible is this? Are there major problems for this?
- How do you anticipate using this?
- ---
- If a work is ILL'd, let me know that, and if you've gotten the PDF, clip it to the note and upload it.
- Try to make sure you used the clip technique that will get you back to a full text source, protect / record a volatile source / give you the information you need.

Paper

- 8-10 pages (min 8 full pages before Works Cited), accurate MLA format, DS, 12pt Times New Roman
- First paragraph states thesis and names and authors of primary works and precise thesis that articulates the adaptation relationship.
- Argument follows its own course.
- At least one theoretical work cited and used well and accurately.
- Lively readable academic prose (avoid passive voice, keep subject/verb relationships and pronoun references clear).
- You may include still frames from your movie to help make points about visuals. They should not be more than ¼ of a page, and should not seem as if they are padding your page count.
- Can apply any approach. Don't be afraid of close reading, or of approaches that take into account societal, industrial, technological or financial forces, in addition to close reading.
- Make it as entertaining, insightful, and flawlessly rational as you possibly can. Show your thought process.

Parts of Adaptation Project (option 2)

Research Update / Annotated Evernote Source List

- Continue the Evernote research questions, adding new questions (no matter how minor) and noting when you've either answered them, found them unanswerable, or decided they are irrelevant.
- Find a good copy of what you want to adapt: read and reread. Mark up the scenes you want to use.
- Look up, Evernote clip, order, and read criticism on the source material you wish to adapt: remember that adaptation is one form of interpretation. Use sources from scholarly monographs, collections of essays, and peer-reviewed journals. You'll order and review at least a dozen, and use the most applicable to your research in the paper.
- Research, find, and watch films where directors used an approach you might want to admire and emulate (or avoid). Read about those adaptation processes. Interviews where screenwriters and directors talk about their approaches may prove invaluable.
- Look for really relevant adaptation theory material to inform your project. You'll want to articulate your concept of the relationship between the source work and your proposed adaptation.

- Search using the Academic Search Complete, MLA International Bibliography, Google Scholar, WorldCat, and Google Books (and anything else that seems likely). Look for film-specific databases. If all else fails, find reputable journalistic reviews and blogs that you consider a solid and reliable sources working in depth.
- If you are unfamiliar with the conventions of scriptwriting, feel free to find guides, how tos and other resources.
- Do not include encyclopedia entries, Cliff's notes or other online study guides.
- Write a **1-2 page (MLA, double space, Times New Roman) informal account of your research and writing progress:** what you've found and what you're looking for. How far along in selecting your scenes and creating your adaptation are you? Use the first person ("I"), and be informal and direct.
- **Annotate the 10 best sources in your Evernote list.** Let me know, in a paragraph or so at the top of each note:
 - What kind of source is this?
 - Is this a primary or secondary source? (Is it a film, a script, documentation from the film or directly from an author, like interviews, correspondence, memoir, etc) etc., or someone outside's opinion)
 - Is this scholarly / peer reviewed? (Does it have extensive scholarly footnoting, was it published in a non-journalistic / non-commercial academic journal or from an academic press? (Googling for the name of a journal and the word 'submissions' will generally give you a good idea whether it is peer reviewed)
 - Is it contemporary? (Was it written in immediate reaction to the primary work?)
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The Theoretical Preface

- 3-5 pages, accurate MLA format, DS, 12pt Times New Roman
- Argue, with good close reading and citations from the original work, for what the original work meant or did. Show some subtle understanding and insight.
- Include some citations to secondary sources that show your understanding of the original work.
- Explain why you made the changes you made—what motivated them. If you selected one scene out of a larger work, why? Why did you choose the genre or approach you did? What other films, writers, or directors did you use for inspiration for your adaptation approach or writing style?
- Include at least three excellent secondary sources (books or peer-reviewed articles) that inform your reading of the original work or provide you vocabulary to talk about your approach to adaptation. Other sources should be used as necessary to support your arguments.
- Explain the constraints, difficulties, or opportunities of the new genre or approach. What was easier to do in the new format or approach? What was harder?

- Make some side-by-side or head-to-head comparisons to illustrate the relationship between the two.

The Research Question and Sources Folder (in Evernote)

- Your questions about the book, and about your adaptation, answered as you have been able to come up with them
- Your sources list, annotated and tagged, as developed during the research process and added to since the research update.

The Treatment

For the purposes of this assignment, a treatment is a carefully written, saleable explanation of the action of your proposed film, all in present tense, playing up the tensions, the emotional impact, and the action of the plot. It should be somewhere between an elevator pitch and a short story. Keep it short: 5 pages should more than do it.

The Sample Screenplay Scenes

A minimum of four complete scenes, formatted as a standard screenplay. You may be as detailed with camera and stage direction as you like (look through screenplays and pick one with a level of detail you like). These four scenes might contain the whole adaptation (if it's a very short work), or just be a solid sample.

Advice:

- Make it awesome. Keep the cool parts. Write in a precise, correct, concise, but entertaining voice if possible.
- Make sure your sources are reliable, and your facts are relevant. Double check names of characters, authors, etc.
- Write clearly above all else. The research report or adaptation report can use "I." Avoid passive voice when writing.
- If you include graphics that only look good in color, print in color.
- When attempting an adaptation, follow good practice in the new medium. Read some scripts. If you want to try storyboarding, look at some of those.
- Remember your basic search skills for needed research: search the MLA database, Google Books, Google Scholar, WorldCAT, Academic Search Complete, and the library catalogue, at a minimum. Don't let googling for webpages be all your research
- Start research early if possible. If you need interlibrary loan, the sooner submitted, the better.