

Writing 100: From Page To Screen: Film Adaptations of Literature

Spring 2006
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Course Theme

This writing course provides students with the opportunity to reflect critically on how they respond to film adaptations of select novels and short stories.

Over the course of the semester, we will address three interrelated questions. First, how do different film directors use the “language” of film to present a **visual** interpretation of literature? Second, to what extent does such a visual interpretation of literature make a statement about the culture and society we live in? And third, what sort of criteria should we use in the attempt to determine the strengths and weaknesses of a particular film director’s “statement” about society?

Required Texts

Burgess, Anthony. A Clockwork Orange

Greene, Graham. The Quiet American.

Hacker, Diana. Bedford Handbook for Writers. 6th edition.

(All books available at Moravian College Bookstore).

Class Format

This course will be primarily discussion-based. Each student is therefore required to complete the reading assignment prior to the beginning of class. This will allow each student to participate in classroom discussions and workshops that will help him or her develop the ideas and arguments which are necessary for writing well-organized essays.

Writing Assignments

PLEASE NOTE: NO LATE PAPERS ARE ACCEPTED

Each student will draft and complete three 3-4 page papers, one collaborative, 5-page essay (co-authored with another student) and 10 short writing exercises.

The 10 writing exercises will serve two primary purposes: they will focus on a particular form or aspect of writing (such as commenting on a cited passage from a particular text or presenting a thesis), and they will form the building blocks for the 4 longer essays.

Schedule of writing assignments and corresponding course material to be covered (Note:

schedule subject to change):

I. January 16 to February 14

First 3-4 page essay: Commentary

In this assignment, students will critique a select scene of a film, focusing on how the director has chosen to represent a certain passage of a literary work. Each student will be expected to write a sustained commentary in which they incorporate material they have studied on the art of cinematic adaptation.

Themes: Point of View, Style and Tone in Literature and Film; The Vietnam War Film; The relationship between “public” and “private” in film and literature.

Texts/Films:

W.H. Auden, “The Unknown Citizen.”
Pat Aufderheide, “Vietnam: Good Soldiers.”
Joseph Boggs, “The Problems of Adaptation.”
Graham Greene, The Quiet American.
Joseph Mankiewicz, “The Quiet American.”
Phillip Noyce, “The Quiet American.”

II. February 16 to March 16

Second 3-4 page essay: Commentary

In this assignment, students will again critique a select scene of a film, focusing on how the director has chosen to represent a certain passage of a literary work. Each student will be expected to write a sustained commentary in which they incorporate material they have studied on the art of cinematic adaptation.

Themes: Relationship between music and image in film; “Dystopia” as film genre; Debates on Screen Violence.

Texts/Films:

Anthony Burgess, A Clockwork Orange.
William Ferrell, “Reading the Novel into Film.”
Stanley Kubrick, “A Clockwork Orange.”
Hugo Mauerhofer, “Psychology of Film Experience.”

III. March 21-April 29

Third 3-page essay: Response Paper

In this paper, a student will critique a collaborative paper presented to the class by two other students. The critique will be based on the student’s own interpretation of the film and short-story which the collaborative paper focused upon.

Collaborative 5-page essay:

Choosing from a list of film adaptations of short stories, students will co-author a paper that focuses on a theme of their choice. This assignment will also allow students to conduct independent research, evaluate sources and develop an original argument.

In order to assist the student with this project, there will be several research related assignments due throughout the semester. There will also be a class session conducted by a librarian that is designed to introduce students to various library resources that will assist them with their projects.

A list of short-stories and film adaptations will be distributed the second week of class. Please select your first and second choices by February 2nd (I will meet with any student who wishes to consult with me before making his or her selection).

Oral Presentation

This presentation will be based on the collaborative 5-page paper. Therefore, the oral presentation itself will also be collaborative. All students are required to meet with professor at least once before presenting their material.

Quizzes

Unannounced quizzes on the reading assignments will be given throughout the semester in order to encourage students to keep up with the assigned reading.

Grades

Final grades will be determined on the basis of the following percentages:

3 three-page essays: 30%
1 collaborative essay: 20%
1 Oral Presentation: 15%
Quizzes: 10%
10 Writing Exercises: 15%
Peer Reviews: 10%

While this grading system is obviously quantitative, the final grade will be determined, in part, by a qualitative consideration: that is, on the basis of the first essay, each student will meet with the instructor to establish a set of goals for the rest of the semester in order to improve his or her writing in specific ways. If these goals are met, then the final grade will be adjusted upwards.

Attendance Policy

Regular class attendance is of course expected. There is no penalty for unexcused absences. However, please note the following:

* there will be no make-up quizzes given if you are not present on one of the days that a quiz is

given.

* there will be no make-up assignment for missing one of the graded peer-review sessions.

* no late papers are accepted (Moreover, due to past difficulties arising from electronic mail submissions, all essays are to be handed in during class. No essay is to be turned in via email.).

Academic Honesty

Please consult the Moravian College policy as stipulated in the Student Handbook.

GUIDELINES

Writing 100

Texts

Hacker, Diana. *The Bedford Handbook*, 6th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2002.
Plus any additional text(s) chosen by instructor.

Course Description and Objectives

Writing 100 introduces writing as a communication process that is central to learning and life. In this course, you will work collaboratively in workshop settings and practice both oral and written communication. The subject area focus of each section of Writing 100 will involve reading and discussion of ideas and styles, and because Writing 100 focuses on college-level reading and writing, students will begin to sharpen the critical reasoning skills needed for success in any academic discipline at Moravian.

By the end of this course, students will

- Understand writing as a way of thinking and demonstrate that in the act of writing a writer may construct new knowledge
- Understand that success in writing lies in attention to the process as much as in the form of the final product and experience the power of collaboration as part of that process
- Increase their ability to read critically and comprehensively and to synthesize ideas from sources with their own ideas
- See how reading and talking about writing contribute to the development of writing abilities
- Gain facility in writing in a variety of genres for a variety of audiences
- Gain experience in using technology for research and writing and demonstrate competence in finding materials through research and in citing them in an academic style
- Become aware of errors in grammar, usage, punctuation and spelling that may impede a reader's understanding and increase their facility in avoiding or correcting such errors
- Be able to format a paper for an academic reader

Course Requirements

Each student enrolled in Writing 100 will complete several pieces of writing, formal and informal, graded or ungraded, this semester. You should expect to receive suggestions from your instructor or classmates as you develop writing assignments through multiple drafts. Individual conferences, written comments, small group workshops—all may be used to help you answer the questions that accompany planning, writing, revising, and editing a piece of writing.

At least one writing assignment should involve substantial use of Reeves Library. You will be responsible for investigating and developing a workable topic as you learn to implement the skills of research. By the time you complete Writing 100, you should be proficient in the following “**basic competencies**”:

- Define a research need
 - Formulate a research topic
 - Determine an information need
- Plan and execute a search for information
 - Identify key terms and concepts
 - Identify the most appropriate sources of information
 - Use Boolean operators and truncation where appropriate
 - Impose limiters (e.g., scholarly vs. popular, date, language)
 - Modify the search based on search results
- Know how and where to find the sources discovered in the search process
 - Determine which sources the library owns or provides access to and retrieve them
 - Request material not owned by the library on Interlibrary Loan
 - Locate material faculty may have put on reserve in the library
- Understand the obligation to credit sources and be able to do so in an appropriate citation style

Writing as a Process

Writing is more than simply a report of what you know and see; it's also an important way of exploring a subject. Developing a finished piece of writing through time and involving the recursive steps discussed below can deepen your understanding of the world and yourself in a way that reading and thinking by themselves cannot. By practicing writing in this way, we hope that you can eventually become your own teacher/editor and be able to use writing as a way of learning. Here is a brief review of the essential steps. They are based upon what we know about how successful writers actually work.

Prewriting (or planning) is the work you do before composing and includes those important early decisions about purpose, your audience, and a style to fit. Prewriting also means reading, taking notes, talking to others, outlining, or freewriting—in other words, gathering together your information and thoughts.

Writing (or drafting or composing) those first words on a blank page is sometimes the most difficult step, often preceded by procrastination and anxiety that the writing will not work and that you might fail. Beginning writers should remember that it is neither natural nor possible for the words to come out just right the first time. Trying to make each sentence perfect before going to the next is one of the worst things to do. Writing takes time and often trial and error to become exact. The process we follow at Moravian allows time for your unique mind and your store of language to work together.

Therefore, writing the first draft should be the fastest part of the process. You should write freely and without concern for style or mechanics in order to probe your ideas and let the act of writing help you discover what needs to be said. This first draft should be an open conversation between you and the writing. But for this conversation to move forward, you the writer must continue to put words on paper and respond to those words by writing more. Most any words will do to start the ball rolling, to set up this dialogue between you and the page. You are simply using writing to make yourself think in a sustained way about your topic. You aren't even sure yet what you wish to say. What comes out may surprise you. But at least give yourself a chance to let your thoughts flow in writing without trying to make each sentence correct before going to the next.

The best advice is not to fret over a first draft. Simply get something on paper to work with. Concentrate on filling up on the pages with words. If you get stuck, reread what you've written or consult your outline and then force yourself to start moving the pen or the keys on the keyboard again, even if you have to write, "I'm stuck and I don't know why. What I wish to say is. . . ." Most of all, make a mess. Paper is cheap, but the price is dear of trying to get everything right on the first draft.

Revising is the crucial stage. Indeed, it has often been said that good writing is rewriting. It is through multiple drafts that a piece of writing is developed to fulfill the writer's purpose for a reader. You may add paragraphs and sentences while deleting old ones, or restyle flabby sentences and sharpen word choice now that the ideas are clearer. You may even "trash" much of what you've written in a first draft as your purpose and your sense of yourself in relation to your audience becomes sharper.

Writing on a computer can be of great advantage. You can produce clean multiple drafts fairly quickly, and you can use aids such as automatic style, spelling, and grammar checkers. Do be careful to save earlier drafts of your work, as your instructor will probably wish to see the various stages of your work. Also, some instructors may ask you to provide copies of earlier drafts to some of your fellow students for their suggestions for improvement.

The secret to writing successfully is, above all else, the willingness to revise and pride in doing so. Professional writers expect to revise words, sentences, and paragraphs. Always ahead in this stage of revision are several opportunities to get it right.

Final editing and proofreading await you at the end of the writing process--at the very end. For the first time the writer becomes a police officer, inspecting and verifying the grammar and spelling and punctuation. Good writing is much more than good grammar, but for most academic essays, the two go together. So writers at this point become anxious that no spelling or grammatical blunder will interfere with a reader's ability to understand and enjoy what was written.

You won't always have as much time as you would like for every essay. All of us, students and teachers alike, must learn to live within the limitations of this special version of life called college. But you can still practice this process of writing, learning to anticipate each stage and the writing problems that are a part of it. Someday your success will almost certainly depend, at least in part, on your ability to write meaningfully and to write with style. This semester is the time to start to get ready for that moment.

Writing Center

The Writing Center, on the second floor of Zinzendorf Hall, is there to support the efforts of all writers at Moravian College. The tutors there are students who are good writers and who are professionally trained to help you improve your writing. They will go over an essay draft with you and guide your understanding of how you might improve that draft. You could also drop by to pick up some of the free handouts on virtually every part of writing: getting started, writing a thesis, developing paragraphs, eliminating wordiness, using commas, and the like. The Writing Center is generally open Monday-Thursday afternoons and Sunday evenings during the semester. Its phone number is 861-1592.

Learning Services Office

If you have a learning disability and believe you may require accommodation to succeed in this course, you should contact the Learning Services Office at 1307 Main Street. Do this as soon as possible to enhance the likelihood that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

ACADEMIC HONESTY AT MORAVIAN COLLEGE

Policy on Academic Honesty

Moravian College expects its students to perform their academic work honestly and fairly. A Moravian student, moreover, should neither hinder nor unfairly assist the efforts of other students to complete their work successfully. This policy of academic integrity is the foundation on which learning at Moravian is built.

The College's expectations and the consequences of failure to meet these expectations are outlined below. If at any point in your academic work at Moravian you are uncertain about your responsibility as a scholar or about the propriety of a particular action, consult your instructor. In general, you should be guided by the following principles.

Guidelines for Honesty

All work that you submit or present as part of course assignments or requirements must be your original work unless otherwise expressly permitted by the instructor. This includes any work presented, be it in written, oral, or electronic form or in any other technical or artistic medium. When you use the specific thoughts, ideas, writings, or expressions of another person, you must accompany each instance of use with some form of attribution to the source. Direct quotes from any source (including the Internet) must be placed in quotation marks (or otherwise marked appropriately) and accompanied by proper citation, following the preferred bibliographic conventions of your department or instructor. It is the instructor's responsibility to make clear to all students in his or her class the preferred or required citation style for student work. Student ignorance of bibliographic convention and citation procedures is not a valid excuse for having committed plagiarism.

When you use the specific thoughts, ideas, writing, or expressions of another person, you must accompany each instance of use with some form of attribution to the source.

You may not collaborate during an in-class examination, test, or quiz. You may not work with others on out-of-class assignments, exams, or projects unless expressly allowed or instructed to do so by the course instructor. If you have any reservations about your role in working on any out-of-class assignments, you must consult with your course instructor. In each Writing 100 class and in the Writing Center, we try to establish a community of writers who can review and provide helpful criticism of each other's work. Although no students in your class or in the Writing Center should ever be allowed to write your paper for you, they are encouraged to read your work and to offer suggestions for improving it. Such collaboration is a natural part of a community of writers.

You may not use writing or research that is obtained from a "paper service" or that is purchased from any person or entity, unless you fully disclose such activity to the instructor and are given express permission.

You may not use writing or research obtained from any other student previously or currently enrolled at Moravian or elsewhere or from the files of any student organization, such as fraternity or sorority files, unless you are expressly permitted to do so by the instructor.

You must keep all notes, drafts, and materials used in preparing assignments until a final course grade is given. In the case of work in electronic form, you may be asked to maintain all intermediate drafts and notes electronically or in hard copy until final grades are given. All

these materials must be available for inspection by the instructor at any time.

Plagiarism

A major form of academic dishonesty is plagiarism, which we define as the use, whether deliberate or not, of any outside source without proper acknowledgment; an “outside source” is defined as any work (published or unpublished), composed, written, or created by any person other than the student who submitted the work (adapted from Napolitano vs. Princeton). Instructors often encourage—and in the case of research essays, require—students to include the ideas of others in their writing. In such cases, students must take care to cite the sources of these ideas correctly (in other words, to give credit where credit is due). *The Bedford Handbook* provides guidance in using several systems for documenting sources.

At Moravian, if a Writing 100 instructor suspects plagiarism, the student will be asked to show the notes and rough copy used in preparing the paper. The instructor also has the right to see any books or periodicals that were used. The grade for the paper will be suspended until these materials have been reviewed. An instructor who suspects a student of violating the policy on academic honesty with regard to an assignment, requirement, examination, test, or quiz will consult with the Director of Writing Across the Curriculum, using a blind copy of the work in question, to verify the violation. If the charge is verified, the instructor will, in almost all cases, assign either a grade of zero to the academic work in question or a failing grade in the course in which the violation occurred. The student must be informed in writing of the alleged violation and penalty; a copy of this memo must be sent to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs.