

English Department ENG 2400 Films from Literature

(3 hours, 3 credits)

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Pre or Co-requisite: English Composition I (3 hours, 3 credits)

Course description: ENG 2400 is a course that allows students to examine the relationship between films and their literary sources. Through classroom discussion and out-of-class assignments, students will analyze classic and contemporary literary texts and their cinematic versions. Students will examine the relationship between film and literature, with specific focus on the techniques used in fiction, drama, and film, and the influences of censorship and society. Students will focus on the similarities and differences of literary works adapted into films.

Course Objectives:

- Recognize literary devices.
- Understand forms and techniques of cinematic narratives.
- Investigate technical, cultural, political, historical, and economic contexts that shape the construction of films based on published works.
- Develop communication skills by discussing and writing about literature-based motion pictures employing analysis and comparison contrast.
- Improve reading/viewing skills that enhance appreciation of the relationship between literature and films.
- Enhance critical thinking skills.

Grading Assessments:

	Item Percentage
Essays/Readings/Quizzes	55%
Midterm Exam	20%
Final	10%
Attendance (unique course content and book purchase)	15%

Required text:

Masiello, Frank. Reading Movies. 2nd Ed. New York: Linus, 2015 NEW EDITION

Please note: The textbook is required, second edition.

No other purchases are necessary.

- Recommended (these are provided free but you may wish to buy an actual book)
Burgess, Anthony. A Clockwork Orange. Any edition that contains the “missing last chapter.”
- Recommended Lolita novel version: Nabokov, Vladimir. The Annotated Lolita. New York: Vintage, 1991.
(but any library edition will suffice)

Please note:

Of the required readings, all of the eight stories, including the novels named above, will be provided free. For the free stories, you must either get them from me on a flashdrive (all eight stories are 2.1 MB grand total) or, less efficiently, via e-mailing me: fmasiello@citytech.cuny.edu

Go to <https://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu> for assignments. This requires a user ID and password. Since you need to start reading Lolita immediately, you may get the pdf of the whole book by emailing me asap.

Course Calendar

- **Week 1 Jan. 29** Introductory discussion and course plan.
 - Introduction to class;
 - Test: pre-test on literary and cinematic terminology
 - Film clips on matters of movie controversy, language, cinematic terms, editing, and adaptation.
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- **Week 2 Feb. 5** · Read Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita*, minimally chapters 1 through 10 to about the first half (the entire novel must be completed by week 4).
Compare a modern novel to its films.
Discuss literary devices from novel: including first-person narration, alliteration, parallelism, and metaphor.
View corresponding film clips from both film versions by Stanley Kubrick (1962) and Adrian Lyne (1998).
Discuss film techniques: View compilation on Cinematic Techniques
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Feb. 12 Holiday (Lincoln's Birthday) no classes

- **Week 3 Feb. 19** Compare a modern novel to its films.

**You must have finished reading *Lolita* before our next class.
There will be a 2-page quiz due by email by Feb. 25**

View compilation on Cinematic Techniques (see Dropbox) video is called Cin I or Cinema I (unique compilations for our class not available anywhere else but Dropbox,)

A 2-page quiz on the novel *Lolita* must be completed prior to watching the films. The whole point of the quiz is the films

are different and this is a literature class. You learn by reading.

- **Week 4 Feb. 26** View Stanley Kubrick's *Lolita* (1962) via Dropbox

Homework: start comparing the novel to this first film version...**essay 1, due week 6 (weeks from now but start thinking and writing a rough draft since this is the longest essay of the course):**

Essay 1 (minimum 750 words): Write comparison of Nabokov's **novel and the two films: what were the changes and why were they made?**

**Be specific, the more details from all three versions, the better.
This is your biggest essay for the entire course.**

A separate detailed handout is on OpenLab in Docs folder called "essay 1."

Do the films capture the intent of the book?

Also, before completing essay 1, read the following:

- **Textbook: Read the chapter of *Reading Movies* called "The Novel" also**
 - **Introduction pages ix-xi,**
 - **Chapter 1 pages 2-16**
 - **Chapter 2 pages 18-53**
- **Week 5 Mar. 5** View newer version of *Lolita* (1997) via Dropbox (also may be available on tubitv.com)
Keep working on your essay.
Include details to compare from the second film version.

- **Week 6 Mar. 12 **essay 1 is due****
- View film compilations on Point of View, Cinematic Techniques, and Alfred Hitchcock material (See Dropbox, and you will be notified which videos to watch)
- **Homework:**
read Cornell Woodrich's "Rear Window"
(copy provided to you via email)

- **Week 7 Mar. 19** Compare modern short story to its film.
- **Quiz: "Rear Window"**
- **watch *Rear Window* via Dropbox** no homework, but look at essay 2 prompt to know where we are going with this story

- **Week 8 Mar. 26** watch *Psycho* (1960)

Homework:

(A) Read short novel *Psycho* for next week's quiz and towards essay 2

- **(note: this is the ONLY time we will view a film BEFORE reading its source story...you will see why)**

(B) Homework Essay 2 **(minimum 750 words):**

Write a comparison/contrast using Hitchcock's two films and their source stories: note at least three changes IN EACH STORY and defend why you think the changes were effective or ineffective.

Detailed instructions are on OpenLab called in document "essay 2."

Spring Recess ___no classes Mar. 27 through Apr. 4

Week 9 Apr. 9 **quiz on Robert Bloch's short novel, *Psycho***

View comparative film clips of various *Romeo and Juliet* versions

View compilation of film techniques: symbolism

View film compilations on symbolism

(unique compilations for this class only available on Dropbox)

Homework:

(A) **Begin your two part, open-book midterm test on Chapters 2 and 6 of textbook. Both test parts are available on OpenLab.**

(If you did not buy the textbook, you will still do the midterm using internet sources. Bonus points for those who buy the book and show proof of purchase.)

So far you have been assigned two essays and the midterm test has two parts. Altogether that is four documents

THREE of which are due next week. All four are required assignments!

(B) Homework for Nov. 1, read play: *A Streetcar Named Desire*

- **Week 10 Apr. 16** comparing a modern play to its film version

Quiz on *A Streetcar Named Desire*

Screening of film version of *A Streetcar Named Desire*

- **Homework: Read Romeo and Juliet for week 13, next week.**
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- **Week 11 Apr. 23** comparing a classic play to its film version
View 1969 version of *Romeo and Juliet* (via Dropbox)
Homework Essay:
Essay 3 (750 words): Write a comparison/contrast using Shakespeare's play and the film version we watched: note at least three changes and defend why you think the changes were effective or ineffective.
- Also, discuss the film version of Tennessee Williams' play concentrating on changes due to censorship considerations, the Hollywood studio star system, and so forth. (See the separate OpenLab document "essay three" Plays into Films.) **Both play to film stories are included in essay 3.**

Homework: Read short story, "It's a Wonderful Life"

- **Week 12 Apr. 30**

Quiz on "It's a Wonderful Life"

Screening of *It's a Wonderful Life*

Homework:

Read short story: Arthur C. Clarke's "The Sentinel." It became the classic film, *2001: A Space Odyssey*

(Please note: The novel version of *2001: A Space Odyssey* was published after the screenplay.)

Our literary readings are the versions that preceded the films, so we are reading **only** the short story from which the film was derived.)

Week 13 May 7 Screening of *2001: A Space Odyssey* (no quiz—film takes up 2.5 hours)

PLEASE START READING A CLOCKWORK ORANGE asap

- **Week 14 May 14** View film compilations on Cinematic Techniques I11 and IV, including use of sound and music (not available anywhere else but in class today)

Homework: finish *A Clockwork Orange* by next and last class, May 21.

Week 15 May 21

LAST CLASS

Quiz on novel *A Clockwork Orange*

Further questions on this **film** version will be included on the final essay.

Screening of *A Clockwork Orange*

Fifth and last essay due soon, email by May 25

Note: specific assignment sheets with more detailed instructions than what you see below are listed on the openlab site.

Essay 1 (750 words): Write comparison of Nabokov's novel and Kubrick's film and Lynn's film : why were changes made? Do the films capture the intent of the book?

See the separate document "essay one" Lolita comparisons.

Use the separate document "Comparison/Contrast" as a guide.

Remember, you are doing a three-way comparison: the novel and both films.

Essay 2 (750 words):

Write a comparison/contrast using Hitchcock's two films and their source stories: note at least three changes IN EACH STORY and defend why you think the changes were effective or ineffective. (See the separate essay document, "essay two" Hitchcock essay.)

Essay 3 (750 words): Write a comparison/contrast using Shakespeare's play and one of the film versions: note at least three changes and defend why you think the changes were effective or ineffective. Also, discuss the film version of Tennessee Williams' play concentrating on changes due to censorship considerations, the Hollywood studio star system, and so forth. (See the separate essay document. "essay three" Plays into Films.

Essay 4 (750 words): Two short stories made into classic films. (See the separate essay document "essay four.")

Essay 5- Write comparison of Burgess's novel and Kubrick's film. (See the separate document (essay five, "Final Essay")

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