

English Department ENG 2400 Films from Literature (3 hrs, 3 credits)

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Spring 2024 on-line Please be prompt. If you arrive late, we cannot drop everything to bring you up-to-date. Please do not disappear mysteriously. Attendance will be noted at random times.

Pre- or corequisite: 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 and cinematic devices.
- Understand terms 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/Online Discussion Posts/Quizzes	75%
Final	10%
Attendance	15%

Textbook (recommended but not required):

1. Masiello, Frank. Reading Movies. 2nd Ed. New York: Linus, 2015 NEW EDITION
 - Please note: you will get extra credit for proof of buying and using the book.

No purchases are necessary. If you have book money or like to build your home library you can buy 1, 2, and 3.

- Recommended novels (these are provided free but you may wish to buy an actual book):

2) Burgess, Anthony. A Clockwork Orange. Any edition that contains the “missing last chapter.”

3) recommended version: Nabokov, Vladimir. The Annotated Lolita. New York: Vintage, 1991. (any library edition will suffice)

4) Bloch, Robert. Psycho: A Novel any edition of this novel written in 1959.

Course Procedures

Of the required readings, all of the eight stories, including the novels named above, will be provided free. For the free stories, you must get them via e-mailing me: Frank.Masiello55@login.cuny.ed

- You will get all the eight stories for the semester on day one.
- You should get used to checking your college emails at least 2X per week.
- Nine films and various video compilations will be linked on Dropbox.
- Six subsequent quizzes are only sent to you upon request after reading the stories and before viewing the films. Quizzes are emailed.

- **Four essays** are to be emailed to me as attachments, but not pdf files. The prompts are posted in the Docs folder. in OpenLab.
- Weekly discussion posts are written by you on OpenLab.
- Please note: When you write down the name of a movie, a novel, or a play, you use underlining or *italics*.
ex. The Godfather, Oppenheimer. Only short story titles use quotation marks, ex. "The Tell-tale Heart"!
- The final exam is emailed to me at the end of the semester.
- Prompts for all essays—excluding quizzes—are already posted.
- Weekly discussion posts will be uploaded by me gradually
- You will receive notifications of document availability via email

This course is meant to be both informative and entertaining.

Do not fall behind. The course is designed to last 2.5 hours per week in classwork, separate from homework. Homework is reading and writing.

Students who keep up with each week's assignment tend to do well and those who fall behind tend to fail because they never catch up.

Go to [City Tech OpenLab \(cuny.edu\)](https://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu) for assignments.

This site and course require a user ID and password.

Since you need to start reading the novel ***Lolita*** immediately, you may get the pdf of the whole book by emailing me asap.

The videos and full films we will watch are supposed to be seen synchronously (Fridays from 11:30 till 2:00), but they will be made available for you to see at your own pace as well.

OpenLab requires that you use your college email. There is no other way.

Course Calendar

Week 1 Jan. 26

Classwork

- Introduction to class
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- **Test:** pre-test on literary and cinematic terminology to see what you already know. It will not affect your grade.
- Watch film clips on matters of movie controversy, language, cinematic terms, editing, and adaptation.
- **Post responses on OpenLab in the Discussion folder:**

[City Tech OpenLab \(cuny.edu\)](https://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/)

HOMEWORK

Begin reading the novel *Lolita* by Vladimir Nabokov

Read *Lolita*, minimally chapters 1 through 10 or about the first half (the entire novel must be completed by week 4). We will discuss these chapters next week

Week 2 Feb. 2

Compare a modern novel to its films.

- **Discuss literary** devices from the novel: including first-person narration, alliteration, parallelism, and metaphor.
- **View corresponding film clips from both film versions by Stanley Kubrick (1962) and Adrian Lyne (1997). Post responses on OpenLab.**

- Discuss film techniques: **View compilation on Cinematic Techniques (you will get a Dropbox link)**
 - **Post responses on Open Lab in Discussion**
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Week 3 Feb. 9 Compare a modern novel to its films.

→You should have finished reading *Lolita* before our next class.

- **After completing the whole novel, request its quiz.**

Once you finish the quiz, I will send you the free links to both versions of the film. You need a free Dropbox account:

- <https://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/cis/technology-services/dropbox/> (login is your college email)
 - View compilation on Cinematic Techniques. **Post responses on OpenLab.**
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Week 4 Feb. 16 View *Lolita* (1962) directed by Stanley Kubrick.

- **Homework:** start writing, comparing the novel to this first film version **before** watching the remake...

Homework

- **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 (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. Please read and carefully follow the lengthy prompt for essay 1, posted in Docs

The detailed “handout” is available via [City Tech OpenLab \(cuny.edu\)](https://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/) called “essay 1.”

- Do the films capture the intent of the book?
- Why do you think changes were made?
- Include at least three things that were changed and refer to all three version: the novel and both films.

(Also, before completing essay 1, if you bought the Reading Movies book, 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 Feb. 23

- **View newer version of *Lolita* (1997) directed by Adrian Lyne. Keep working on your essay.**
- **Include details to compare from the second film version as well as from the first film.**

Week 6 Mar. 1

- View film compilations on *Point of View and *Alfred Hitchcock material

Homework

- Post responses to the Oct. 6 *video compilations on OpenLab in Discussion.
- read Cornell Woodrich’s short story, “Rear Window” (a copy was provided to you in course readings via email)

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- **Week 7 Mar. 8** Compare a modern short story to its film.

- **Quiz:** “Rear Window” by Cornell Woolrich (originally titled “It Had to Be Murder”)
 - watch *Rear Window* directed by Alfred Hitchcock, which will be sent to you after completing the quiz
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Week 8 Mar. 15

Classwork

- watch *Psycho* (1960) directed by Alfred Hitchcock.
- **Note:** this is the **only** time in this course where you will be seeing a film BEFORE reading its source story.
- view brief compilation re *Psycho*
- **Post responses on OpenLab**

Homework

- Read the short novel *Psycho* for next week’s quiz and towards **Essay 2 due Apr. 5 (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 in document called “essay 2.” Please follow **all** of the prompt.
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Week 9 Mar. 22

- quiz on Robert Bloch’s short novel, *Psycho*

Classwork

- View comparative film clips of various **Romeo and Juliet* versions
- View compilation of film techniques: ***symbolism**

- ***Post responses on OpenLabPost to the Mar. 15 videos on OpenLab**

Homework

A. Complete essay 2 on Hitchcock films and their source stories

B. Read *the play A Streetcar Named Desire* By Tennessee Williams

There are no classes on Mar. 29

Week 10 Apr. 5 Comparing a modern play to its film version

- Quiz on *A Streetcar Named Desire*
After the quiz is completed, you will be sent the film of *A Streetcar Named Desire* directed by Elia Kazan.

Homework

- **Read *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare *for week 11. no quiz!***
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Week 11 Apr. 12 comparing a classic play to its film version

- View 1968 version of *Romeo and Juliet* directed by Franco Zeffirelli

Homework

- Essay 3 (750 words): (A) Write a comparison/contrast using Shakespeare's play and the 1968 film version: note at least three changes and defend why you think the changes were effective or ineffective. Also, in the same essay, (B) 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 3** Plays into Films.)

- **Both play-to-film stories are included in essay 3**, due Apr. 19

Homework

- **Read short story, “It’s a Wonderful Life” by Philip Van Doren Stern (originally titled “The Greatest Gift”)**
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Week 12 Apr. 19

- Quiz on “It’s a Wonderful Life” (all quizzes must be requested)
Watch ***It’s a Wonderful Life*** directed by Frank Capra, sent by request **after** completing the quiz

Homework

- **Submit essay 3 as soon as possible. Spring Break. No classes.**

Read short story: “The Sentinel,” by Arthur C. Clarke. It became the classic film, ***2001: A Space Odyssey*** (There is **no** quiz on this story, but it is used in essay4.)

- (Please note: The novel version of ***2001: A Space Odyssey*** was published after the screenplay was completed. Our literary readings are the versions that preceded the films, **source** stories, so we are reading **only** the short story from which the film was derived.)
- Please start reading ***A Clockwork Orange*** by Anthony Burgess asap! It is a novel and will take some time to finish.

Week 13 May 3

- **Watch *2001: A Space Odyssey* directed by Stanley Kubrick**
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Week 14 May 10

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

- **Post responses to these *two video compilations on OpenLab**
- Homework: finish reading *A Clockwork Orange* by our last class, May 17**
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Week 15 May 17 LAST CLASS

- **Quiz on the novel *A Clockwork Orange*. As with all quizzes--there are six quizzes grand total—must be requested.**
- **Further questions on this film will be included on the final essay.**
- **Final Exam on *A Clockwork Orange* book and film is due no later than May 27.**

Classwork

Watch film version of ***A Clockwork Orange*** directed by Stanley Kubrick
Fifth and last assignment, plus any previously unfinished work is due soon;email by May. 27

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.”)

Final Exam on *A Clockwork Orange* (short paragraph answers):

- Write comparison of Burgess’s novel and Kubrick’s film. (See the separate document (essay five, “Final Essay”)

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