

Re-Making the Original: Adaptation and Creative Authenticity

Monday/Wednesday—3:25 to 4:40 Rush Rhees G-108

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Office Hours: Monday/Wednesday—5:00pm to 6:00pm

Course Description:

Filmmaker Jim Jarmusch has been celebrated for his opinion that “Authenticity is invaluable; originality is non-existent.” Ironically, this opinion does not originate with Jarmusch. Dean Inge, a 19th century theologian, wrote that originality was “only undetected and frequently unconscious plagiarism.” In this class, we will explore these boundaries between originality, adaptation and authenticity by looking at a variety of adapted “texts” including plays, novels, video games, cover songs and films. Of particular interest are texts that cross through several of these categories, such as *M*A*S*H*, *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, and some of Isaac Asimov’s work. Are any of these texts “original”? Are the adaptations more or less “authentic” than the “originals”? We will explore these questions in all aspects of our writing, including pre-writing, peer review, self-assessment and the revision process in order to create well-organized essays, culminating with an 8-10 page research paper.

Objectives:

Regardless of your chosen major or profession, writing will be an important part of your academic and professional life. Becoming a *good* writer is not about mastering a particular pattern or technique. It isn’t about five-paragraph structures or the dutiful avoidance of the first person pronoun. Becoming a *good* writer is about understanding that your approach to writing must perpetually change depending on topic, audience and the ultimate impact that you want your writing to have. This notion of writing as a skill in constant flux is at the heart of our study of performance, as we will discuss and practice ways in which argumentative writing can be viewed as a performative process.

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

- Read deeply—It is impossible to create good writing without starting with good reading.
- Ask engaging questions about the texts that you read.
- Locate and synthesize professional discourse on a given topic, and find openings for you to participate in those conversations.
- Develop a debatable thesis about a text or issue that grows out of your questions and participates in the academic discourse.

- Support your ideas with multiple and various kinds of evidence.
- Identify different audiences for your thesis, and adapt your writing in order to more effectively convey your thoughts to those different audiences.

Primary Writing Requirement:

This course fulfills the University of Rochester's primary writing requirement. Please be aware that you must earn a grade of "C" or better in this course to successfully fulfill that requirement.

Grading:

Your final grade for the course will be determined as follows:

- **10%** Participation (including Peer Review and Self-Assessment)
- **15 %** Homework (Regular reading and short writing assignments)
- **10 %** Essay #1 (3-5 pages)
- **15 %** Essay #2 (3-5 pages)
- **15 %** Essay #3 (Abstract and Annotated Bibliography)
- **35 %** Essay #4 (8-10 page research paper)

Final drafts of formal essays will be assigned a letter grade (A, A-, B+, B, etc). Informal assignments will be graded with a check, check minus, or incomplete.

Required Reading/Viewing:

Required readings and film viewings are listed in the course schedule below. I reserve the right to alter this schedule as the course progresses, but I will only do so if absolutely necessary for our work. The majority of course readings will be available in digital format on Blackboard. Whether you print these readings or have an e-reader, I will expect everyone to have access to the readings during class meetings. If you bring a digital device (e-reader, laptop, etc), the **only** appropriate use for that device in class is accessing our readings. Surfing the web is not something that needs to be done during our class meetings.

Attendance and Class Participation:

Please be in class, on time, with your homework (readings and writings) completed. Attendance is crucial for success in this course. We need you here to offer your own unique observations and feedback. Further, we will be engaging in an approach to writing, editing and revision that you have likely never encountered before. If you accrue too many absences, it will be very difficult for you to catch up

with the rest of the class. **If you need to miss class for any reason, please talk to me beforehand.** Being in class is only half of the battle—please come prepared to work collaboratively. We're here to learn from each other and (ideally) have some fun.

Late or Missed Homework/Classwork:

I do not accept late homework for any reason. Stick to the course calendar. If you need to miss class for any reason, consult the course calendar and continue on with the reading. Missing the previous class meeting is not a valid reason for being unprepared for the next course meeting. Take advantage of my office hours if you need help getting caught up.

Short Written Work:

There will be regular writing assignments in this class including short prompts in class (such as journals and self-evaluative writing) as well as writing to be completed for homework (such as short research-related assignments). These assignments will be assessed in a variety of ways, and they should ultimately help you in both constructing and revising your larger, more formal written work.

Essays:

Final drafts of all essays should be submitted via e-mail. These final drafts should follow standard MLA formatting requirements (1 inch margins, double spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, etc). Late papers will lose one third of a letter grade for every day that they are late—(this policy refers to calendar days, including weekends and holidays); if you are having trouble completing your paper before deadline, please speak to me **before** the paper is due.

Peer Review, Self-Assessment, and Revision:

Peer Review, Self-Assessment and Revision will be built into the structure of the course. All of our work should be done in the spirit of constant revision—You should always be thinking about how new information, opinions and audiences will influence your overall argument.

The Writing Center:

The Writing Center (located on the ground floor of Rush Rhees Library, near Connections) is an invaluable resource available to you. I encourage you to visit the

writing center at least once for this course to get support at any stage of your writing process—from choosing a topic to revising your final draft. Nobody writes in a vacuum. My colleagues and I frequently get together to offer feedback on each other's writing and professional writers have been doing the same thing for hundreds of years. The Writing Center provides you with just such an outlet. Use it.

From the Writing Center's website: *"At the University of Rochester, we are all writers, and every writer needs a reader. The College Writing Center is a place where you can find readers who can provide critical feedback at any stage of the writing process, from brainstorming for a topic to polishing a final draft. To learn more about the College Writing Center services and/or to find a tutor, please visit <http://writing.rochester.edu>*

Academic Honesty:

Academic honesty should never be an issue in this course. Early in the semester, we will discuss the reasons and methods for avoiding plagiarism. After that point, this course will have a zero-tolerance policy regarding plagiarism, up to and including receiving a zero for the assignment and a referral to the Academic Honesty Board. Please read, internalize and be aware of the following statement (this statement is official university policy, and can be found in your student handbook):

"As members of an academic community, students and faculty assume certain responsibilities, one of which is to engage in honest communication. Academic dishonesty is a serious violation of the trust upon which an academic community depends. A common form of academic dishonesty is plagiarism. The representation of another person's work as one's own, or the attempt "to blur the line between one's own ideas or words and those borrowed from another source." (Council of Writing Program Administrators, January 2003, <http://wpacouncil.org/node/9>). More specifically, the use of an idea, phrase, or other materials from a written or spoken source without acknowledgment in a work for which the student claims authorship.

Examples include: the misrepresentation of sources used in a work for which the student claims authorship; the improper use of course materials in a work for which the student claims authorship; the use of papers purchased online and turned in as one's own work; submission of written work such as laboratory reports, computer programs, or papers, which have been copied from the work of other students, with or without their knowledge and consent.

A student can avoid the risk of plagiarism in written work or oral presentations by clearly indicating, either in footnotes or in the paper or presentation itself, the source of any idea or wording that he or she did not produce. Sources must be given regardless of whether the idea, phrase or other material is quoted directly, paraphrased or summarized in the student-writer's own words.

In cases where plagiarism is evident, the University's rules governing academic dishonesty will be followed. The typical penalty for a first event of plagiarism in a first year writing course is a "0" for the assignment. This pertains to rough drafts as well as final drafts, and informal writing assignments. As required by College policy, all instances of plagiarism are reported to the College Board of Academic Honesty.

*For the complete College honesty policy, see
<http://www.rochester.edu/college/honesty/index>."*

Support Services (CETL)

Please know that this classroom respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds and abilities, and that I invite you to talk with me about any concern or situation that affects your ability to complete your academic work successfully. Further, I encourage you to make use of the resources available to you on campus, particularly the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. The following information is from CETL's website: "CETL is a resource available to all students in the College. All kinds of students with all kinds of GPAs and academic records make use of our programs. We work with strong students who wish to become even better, as well as with students who have not yet tapped into the strategies needed to succeed in college, and everyone in between. We offer an extensive study group and Workshop program, individual study skills counseling, study skills workshops and a study skills course, and disability support. We are located in 107 Lattimore Hall on the River Campus. To make an appointment or to learn more, stop by our offices, call us at (585) 275-9049, or send an email: cetl@rochester.edu "

Community Contacts

Alternatives for Battered Women Crisis Line	232-7353
Deaf Hotline TTY	232-2854
Family Court Domestic Violence Hotline	428-5787
Gay Alliance Victim Resource	244-8640
Lifeline	275-5151 or 211
Monroe County	
Domestic Violence Consortium	428-2215
Health Dept. STD/HIV Clinic	753-5375
Sheriff's Victim Assistance Office	753-4389
Rape Crisis Service	546-2777
Rochester Police Department	
Emergency	911
Victim Assistance	428-6630
SAATHI	234-1050

All phone numbers Area Code 585

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Campus Support

University Counseling Center (UCC)	275-3113
University Health Service (UHS)	
Eastman School	274-1230
Health Promotion Office	273-5775
Medical Center	275-2662
River Campus	275-2662
www.rochester.edu/uhs	
Center for Student Conflict Management 275-4085	
Title IX Coordinator	275-7814
University Director of Spiritual Life	275-8422
University Intercessor	275-9125
University Security	275-3333
www.rochester.edu/CARE	
<i>All phone numbers Area Code 585</i>	

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Course Calendar:

1/15	<p>WRITE: Diagnostic—Harry Potter/Meme</p> <p>DO: Introductions (who taught you how to write? How is writing done? What is adaptation?). Syllabus. Film viewing. Break class into three regular groups (Green, Blue, and Heliotrope). Peer review/importance thereof (Mali's "The the impotence of proofreading"). Importance of attendance (Cost of UR), Plagiarism Story. What to call me. "I/You/One" and why you should be angry. What is a first draft? Episodes and such (flash drive download day next time), Etc.</p> <p>THINK: What is adaptation? Originality? Authenticity? What do these terms really mean?</p> <p>HW (Due next class): Read the first 5 chapters of <i>MASH</i> (on Blackboard) and watch the film. Set up a Voxopop account and make a post listing and telling me about your three favorite adapted texts. You have one full week to do this.</p> <p>I NOTICED:</p>
1/20 No class MLK Jr. Day	No Class
1/22	<p>WRITE: Journal—First impressions: What are your first, gut reactions to the novel and the film? What did you expect? How did these texts meet/diverge from your expectations?</p> <p>DO: Intro to close reading (Letter Jacket Detectives), discussion of foundation and film. What scenes/chapters can we close read? Review prompt for first paper. Paper formatting/naming.</p> <p>THINK: How does form impact a text? Is it possible to do an authentic adaptation when crossing forms? Sherlock and Watson</p> <p>HW (Due next class): Read Chapters 6 and 7 of <i>MASH</i> (on Blackboard) and watch "Pilot" (season 1, episode 1) and "Chief Surgeon Who?" (season 1, episode 4)—we will discuss how to watch these before leaving class today.</p>

	I NOTICED:
1/27	<p>WRITE: Journal—Quickly read “Birthday Party” and write about your initial reactions. Which character do you find the most interesting? Which is more sympathetic?</p> <p>DO: Thesis Statements—what are they and what should they do? Discussion—three versions of <i>MASH</i>—how is each version telling the same story differently (focus on details)?</p> <p>THINK: How can you derive questions from the details noticed in a close reading? What are those questions good for?</p> <p>HW: Read Chapters 9 and 10 of <i>MASH</i> (on Blackboard) and watch “Deluge/OR” (season 4, episode 23/season 3, episode 5), “The Trial of Henry Blake” (season 2, episode 8), and “Sticky Wicket” (season 1, episode 21).</p>
1/29	<p>WRITE: Close Reading exercise</p> <p>DO: Sentence structure—How can the structure of a sentence convey meaning all by itself? Carding Esteem (close reading of a different sort). Discussion of readings.</p> <p>THINK: If we expand our definition of “reading” to things beyond just written text, what are some of the things that can now be “read”?</p> <p>HW: Supplemental episodes as follows. BE PREPARED TO CARRY THE DISCUSSION:</p> <p>Greens: “Sometimes You Hear the Bullet” (season 1, episode 17), “L.I.P.” (season 2, episode 7), “Abyssinia Henry” (season 3, episode 24), and “Fade Out, Fade In” (season 6, episode 1).</p> <p>Blues: “Point of View” (season 7, episode 10), “Dreams” (season 8, episode 22), “Follies of the Living” (season 10, episode 10), “The Interview” (season 4, episode 24).</p> <p>Heliotropes: “Blood Brothers” (season 9, episode 18), “Peace on Us” (season 7, episode 2), “The Nurses” (season 5, episode 5), “Quo Vadis, Captain Chandler” (season 4, episode 9). First draft of paper one due on Voxopop. First drafts have a rolling deadline—you may upload them at any point between this date and by midnight (at the latest) on Friday the 31st.</p>

	I NOTICED:
2/3	<p>WRITE: Journal—Each color group was assigned their four episodes for a reason. Why do you think I grouped your episodes together? How are they similar? What do they contribute to the world of adaptation and <i>MASH</i>? Just to make it fun—Greens: write your journals as a 1. Blues: write your journals as a 5. Heliotropes: write your journals as a 10.</p> <p>DO: Logical Fallacies, Dylan Garity, close reading exercise for both</p> <p>THINK: Having now read/viewed <i>MASH</i> from a multitude of perspectives, genres and adaptations, how can we use our new knowledge to refine our notions of Adaptation, Originality, Authenticity, etc?</p> <p>HW: Work on your papers.</p>
2/5	<p>Peer Workshop Day: Movie Previews and introductory paragraphs; Cutting a Scene</p> <p>HW: Read “Subtexting” by Brandilyn Collins (on Blackboard). Read the FIRST HALF of Harlan Ellison’s “Jeffty is Five” (on Blackboard).</p> <p>I NOTICED:</p>
2/10	<p>Library Day One (introduction to using the U of R library resources).</p> <p>We will meet in the entry hall of Rush Rhees Library.</p>
2/12 Paper 1 final draft due	<p>WRITE: Describe your take on Jeffty and the other characters from Ellison’s story? How do they look/sound in your head? If you were to adapt the story, how would you do it? How do you think the story should end?</p> <p>DO: Subtext lecture, Seth letter, Jeffty discussion, Listen to end of Jeffty. Audio books and adaptation</p> <p>THINK: How can reading the same thing in different ways create new texts?</p>

	<p>HW: Read the Rawlins piece on audience, and the Morley piece on performing writing (both on Blackboard). Do a 5 minute free talk on Voxopop for paper number two.</p> <p>I NOTICED:</p>
2/17	<p>WRITE: Journal—What is writing? What are the different kinds of writing? How are they different? How were you taught to write?</p> <p>DO: Today, I will tell you the closely guarded secret to good academic writing. It is a magic triangle. Minds will explode and worlds will shake. We will also discuss the two articles, look at translation as adaptation (FMA and FMA:B—Bonus points to people who understand that without me explaining), Ze Frank. Review the prompt for the second paper.</p> <p>THINK: How do notions of performance inform how ALL writing is actually done?</p> <p>HW: Read the article on the influences of <i>Avatar</i> on the Avatar Wiki (link on Blackboard). Watch <i>Spirited Away</i>.</p>
2/19	<p>WRITE: Audience exercise—Topics and stake-holders—ie, how to close-read people.</p> <p>DO: Discussion of <i>Spirited Away</i></p> <p>THINK: What are stake-holders? How can they have different reasons for having strong opinions about the same topic/issue? How does awareness of those opinions factor into good writing?</p> <p>HW: The first draft of paper two is due on Voxopop on a rolling deadline. It must be up there by midnight on Friday, October 18th at the latest. Also, watch the following 8 episodes from season 1 of <i>Avatar: the Last Airbender</i>: “Boy in the Iceberg”, “Avatar Returns”, “Imprisoned”, “The Storm”, “Bato of the Water Tribe”, “The Waterbending Master”, “Siege of the North Part One”, and “Siege of the North Part Two.” You have a full weekend before we discuss these, and it is a kid’s cartoon. No whining. ☺</p> <p>I NOTICED:</p>
2/24	<p>WRITE: Journal—What is an influence? Is that different from an homage? When is it just plain old ripping someone off?</p>

	<p>DO: Discussion of cartoon vs. influence. How was <i>Avatar</i> similar to <i>Spirited Away</i>? How were they different? Who would be the potential stake-holders in a discussion of this topic?</p> <p>THINK: Have you ever tried to emulate an influence? How? Writing? Singing? Dancing? Sports?</p> <p>HW: Watch the film <i>The Last Airbender</i> (I'm really really sorry about this), and then watch the pilot episode from <i>Avatar: The Legend of Korra</i>, and read the two Wired.com articles dealing with Avatar (links on Blackboard).</p>
<p>2/26</p> <p>Paper 2 first draft due on Voxopop</p>	<p>WRITE: When creating an adapted text, do you think it is more important to be true to the original, to make fans happy, or to make money? Explain.</p> <p>DO: Full discussion of the world of Avatar—from influence to television show to film to sequel. How does Avatar change our views of Adaptation, Originality, and Authenticity? What are some potential thesis statements we can create from our close readings? Who are the stake-holders for each thesis? How would we need to adjust our voice to reach those audiences?</p> <p>THINK: What is more important in adaptation? Staying true to the influence or staying true to the text?</p> <p>HW: Writing to different audiences exercise—TBA (I want you to do something self-selected, and I also want you to give ME an assignment—we'll talk about this as it gets closer). First draft of paper two due on Voxopop. First drafts have a rolling deadline—you may upload them at any point between this date and by midnight (at the latest) on Friday the 28th.</p> <p>I NOTICED:</p>
<p>3/3</p>	<p>WRITE: Identify three people in different spheres of your life. How would you go about asking each person for 20 dollars? Are the approaches different? How? Why?</p> <p>DO: Code switching—what is it? How can we make sure we are doing it in our writing? Controversial topics and making a targeted argument.</p> <p>THINK: What is “vague academic tone”? Why is it evil?</p>

	HW: Work on paper two and learn to water bend.
3/5	<p>Peer Workshop Day: Two-Line Scene quotation workshop, Blocking for Subtext (Folger and Miazga), and (time permitting) Cutting a Scene and Soliloquy conclusions.</p> <p>I NOTICED:</p>
3/10---3/16 No class Spring Break	No class. Spring break. Don't do anything I wouldn't do.
3/17 Paper 2 final draft due	<p>WRITE: Journal— Why is research important? Why bother looking through books and articles when we can just do our OWN close readings and explain what we see?</p> <p>DO: The big world of research—how to research, why to research, what to research, how to format your research and how to organize it and use it in your writing (YWES blurb, Captain America example). Also, how to write an abstract and how to annotate a bibliography. Review prompt for third and fourth papers.</p> <p>THINK: What kinds of research am I interested in? Deciding on a major is important, but what will your special interest <i>within</i> that major be?</p> <p>HW: Do a 5 minute free talk on Voxopop for paper number three. Find a professor within your major, and ask them if they could give you the names/titles of two or three of the “top” journals for that field. Bring these titles with you to class on Wednesday</p>
3/19	<p>WRITE: What is the tone of your profession/major? Are there different tones within that profession? Who are the various potential audiences for the work of your profession/major?</p> <p>DO: More work with abstracts and annotated bibliographies—formatting (boring but necessary). Searching via the database (analysis of major rhetoric). Purdue Owl and citation.</p> <p>THINK: What are the dangers of <i>not</i> being able to reach some of</p>

	<p>the potential audiences of your chosen field?</p> <p>HW:</p> <p>I NOTICED:</p>
3/24	<p>Library Day Two. We will actually meet in our classroom like usual. Kristen will be coming to us this time!</p> <p>HW: Read the three links on cover songs (on Blackboard).</p>
3/26 Paper 3 first draft due on Voxopop	<p>No formal class meeting—I will be out of town for a professional conference.</p> <p>HW: Post the first draft of your third paper (one post for the abstract, and then a follow up post for each bibliographic entry and annotation). As always, this has a rolling deadline, between now and Friday, March 30th (You have a bit longer than usual because I will be out of town).</p>
3/31	<p>WRITE: Can you think of a song (not from the reading) that would just seem wrong for anyone else to sing? Is it possible to “save” an awful song via covering it? What is the key component to a successful cover song?</p> <p>DO: Cover songs—Music vs. Music video (Clapton, others), American Pie, Glee, Noah Guthrie, Weird Al (TMZ, Another Tattoo), American Idol/Daughtry and Articles.</p> <p>THINK: How is song adaptation different from the other kinds of adaptation we’ve studied this semester? How do you do a close reading of a song? What kinds of things would you research? Who would be the potential stake-holders?</p> <p>HW: It’s go time—if you haven’t started turning your abstract into an outline and/or paper, it is time. You have all the tools—now write a slammin’ paper.</p>
4/2	<p>WRITE: What does it mean to adapt historical events/people? Is authenticity more important than entertainment when a real person is involved?</p> <p>DO: Falstaff/John Oldcastle, “If We Must Die”, “Ain’t I a Woman”,</p>

	<p><i>Matewan</i></p> <p>THINK: How would you react if part of your life (or a close friend/relative) was adapted in some way for mass consumption?</p> <p>HW: This is still TBD at the moment. I want each group to work with an adaptation of a historical event, with each member of the group doing some research on the actual event to contrast with the adaptation (1 + 1—Academic and mass market). There is room for play here—maybe we can come up with the texts as a group.</p> <p>I NOTICED:</p>
<p>4/7</p> <p>Paper 3 final draft due</p>	<p>WRITE: Journal—Write a reaction to the text your group studied. You should have a targeted audience in mind, and you should want to convince them of something.</p> <p>DO: Discussion of the three texts and the research that came of it. I will offer a list of popular historical adaptations—We will spend some time researching the texts that interest us, and then reporting back.</p> <p>THINK: What role does research play in the A/I/V Triangle? Why is it necessary?</p> <p>HW: Show and Tell (if possible)—Yup, we’re going back to second grade. Bring in (as a link or something similar) one of your childhood staples.</p>
<p>4/9</p>	<p>WRITE: What are your “childhood staples”? What are the texts from your childhood that you LOVED, that seemed absolutely perfect? Do you think they have held up to the test of time?</p> <p>DO: Remakes, Nostalgia and Video games—Spider Man & His Amazing Friends, the Brady Bunch, Wayside School, Madden (Ozymandias—how will these texts “read” hundreds of years from now), Mortal Kombat, Scooby Doo, Hollywood vs. Art House (Solaris) etc.</p> <p>THINK: Is nostalgia a good thing or a bad thing when making an adaptation? Why?</p> <p>HW: Seriously? I just wrote two days ago that it was go time. We are so DONE with homework—your whole focus for this class is</p>

	<p>now all about your big paper. You should get a first draft of that thing up on Voxopop by the 25th.</p> <p>I NOTICED:</p>
4/14	<p>No class (individual conferences)</p>
<p>4/16</p> <p>Paper 4 first draft due on Voxopop</p>	<p>No class (individual conferences)</p> <p>HW: Post the first draft of your final paper. As always, this has a rolling deadline, between now and Friday, April 18th</p>
4/21	<p>WRITE: What are quotations? How were you taught to use them in the past? Be honest, what do you use them for now? How do you know which parts of a source to use as a quotation?</p> <p>DO: We will spend the majority of this class session on a quotation workshop—avoiding the pitfalls (like parroting or floating those quotations) and thinking about how to best use them.</p> <p>THINK: What are quotations from sources <i>really</i> supposed to do? How are they <i>really</i> going to help you?</p> <p>HW: Seriously?</p>
4/23	<p>Peer Workshop Day: Cutting a scene, blocking for subtext and two-line scene quotation use.</p> <p>I NOTICED:</p>
4/28	<p>Peer Workshop Day: Free for all—use the time in class and your group in whichever form of peer review suits you.</p>
<p>4/30</p> <p>Paper 4 final draft due</p>	<p>READ: I'll have something for you to read.</p> <p>EAT: I'll have something for you to eat.</p> <p>DO: Respond the reading, taking it forward, the realities and responsibilities of writing and reading in the world in which we live, and course evaluations.</p>

	<p>THINK: At the beginning of the semester, we defined adaptation, originality, authenticity and writing. Would you change any of those definitions after our work this semester? Why/why not?</p> <p>HW: Go forth, and be amazing.</p> <p>FINAL I NOTICED:</p>
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