Elizabeth Phillips  
Proposed syllabus for English 98: Junior Tutorial  

**The Book Was Better:**  
Film, Theater, and the Novel  

**Course Description**

As early as 1926, Virginia Woolf was already suspicious of cinema’s self-sufficiency from literature, of its ability to be generative and not just parasitic. She wrote of the cinema with a scoff: “The eye licks it all up instantaneously, and the brain, agreeably titillated, settles down to watch things happening without bestirring itself to think.”  

Like Woolf, we, too, we careful and courageous readers of literature, are suspicious and protective of our fictions, and yet we are also titillated by the cinema, consistently shelling out at box offices and shuttering bookstores. We readers have all heard the familiar threnody leaving the theater: “The book was so much better! I can’t believe they... (insert indignant remark).” This tutorial will “bestir itself to think” about the relationship between source and adaptation, about the novel, theater, and film, and about patterns of images that we giddily and guiltily use and re-use, and about the cultural and economic impacts of our tastes and consumption patterns.  

What is it that makes an adaptation sink or swim? What elements of the written word cannot be transposed, even despite bottomless Hollywood pockets? This course will examine not only the blockbuster novel-to-film adaptations, but other modes of adaptation (novel to theater, theater to film, theater to theater, as well as dance, opera, radio, and gaming) as a way of understanding methods and theories of adaptation.  

We will read selections from various critical theories of adaptation, performance, film, in addition to reading, viewing, and discussing adaptations and their sources each week. Students should feel free to explore texts outside those on the syllabus as a focus for the Junior Paper, with permission of the instructor. Additional materials may be added or substituted on the basis of student interest, with the consensus of the tutorial participants.

Active, thoughtful participation in seminar discussion, and weekly attendance 20%  
Four two-page response papers 20%  
Library visits and follow-up correspondence with Harvard University librarians 5%  
Meeting with Departmental Writing Fellow and attendance at tutorial workshops 5%  
Prospectus and bibliography for Junior Paper 10%  
Drafts of Junior Paper (one 10-page draft; one complete draft) 15%  
Junior Paper (20–25 pages) 25%
Course Schedule

Sept. 1 - **Introduction: Image Patterns**
Harold Bloom, “Manifesto for Antithetical Criticism,” in *The Anxiety of Influence* (1973)

Sept. 8 - **Cut Him Out in Little Stars**
William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*
*West Side Story* (musical, Stephen Sondheim, 1957)
*Romeo + Juliet* (film, Baz Luhrmann 1996)
Linda Boose, “Shakespeare Goes Hollywood in the 1990s”

Sept. 15 - **The Austen Industry**
*Pride and Prejudice* (novel, Jane Austen 1813)
selections from *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* (Seth Grahame-Smith, 2009)
“Texts from Lizzie” (Mallory Ortberg, *The Hairpin* 2013)
http://thehairpin.com/2013/02/texts-from-pride-and-prejudice
Deborah Cartmell, Introduction to *Pulping Fictions* (1996)

4:00-5:00 PM All Tutorials Meet

Sept. 22 – **Killing Me Softly**
*Mrs. Dalloway* (novel, Virginia Woolf, 1925)
(optional) *The Hours* (novel, Martin Cunningham, 1998)
*The Hours* (film, dir. Stephen Daldry, 2002)
Mark Axelrod, “Once Upon a Time in Hollywood, or, the commodification of form in adaptations of fictional texts to the Hollywood cinema”
From Roland Barthes, “The Death of the Author” Trans. Stephen Heath

Sept. 29 – **First Languages**
*Lolita* (novel, Vladimir Nabokov, 1955)
*Lolita* (film, Stanley Kubrick, 1962)
Walter Benjamin, “The Task of the Translator,” in *Illuminations*

5pp. Paper Due

Oct. 6 – **A Tale of Sound and Fury: Dance, Immersive Theater, Invisible Text**
William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*
Punchdrunk’s *Sleep No More* (2010)
W.B. Worthen, “‘The Written troubles of the brain’: *Sleep No More* and the Space of Character” *Theater Journal* 2012

Oct. 13 – (either catch up or extend Immersive/Adaptive Theater unit)
Lewis Carroll’s *Through the Looking Glass* (1871)
*Alice in Wonderland* (Disney 1951, Burton 2010, or other among the hundreds of adaptations to ballet, opera, video game, manga—students’ choice)
*Then She Fell* (Third Rail Theater Company, 2010)

4:00-5:00 PM All Tutorials Meet

**Oct. 22 – Adaptation and Transition: Gender**

*Orlando, A Biography* (novel, Virginia Woolf 1928)
*Orlando* (play, Sarah Ruhl 2010)

**Oct. 27 – Adaptation and Transition: Race**

*The Octoroon* (play, Dion Boucicault 1859)
*An Octoroon* (play, Brandon Jacobs-Jenkins 2013)

*Two-page prospectus and preliminary bibliography for Junior Paper due

**Nov. 3 – Switching to Electric**

*Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (novel, Philip K Dick 1968)
*Blade Runner* (film, dir. Ridley Scott, 1982)
(optional) Edward Einhorn’s *Electric Sheep* stage play, 2010, or the BBC radio show of same name, 2014
Herbert Blau, “Theater and Cinema: The Scopic Drive, or More of the Same” (1982)

**Nov. 10 – The Book Wasn’t Better**

Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban (novel, J.K. Rowling, 1999)

*First ten pages of draft of Junior Paper due

**Nov. 17 – Capital and the Capitol**

*The Hunger Games* (novel, Part One of Suzanne Collins’ trilogy, 2008)
*The Hunger Games* (film, dir. Gary Ross 2013)

**Nov. 24 – Writing Conferences and Drafting**

**Dec. 1 – Writing Conferences and Drafting**

**Dec. 8 – JUNIOR PAPER DUE**

**Dec. 7th or 9th – Tutorial-Wide Conference and Presentation of Work**