



Missouri Western State College
Division of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Department of English, Foreign Languages and Journalism
Summer 2004

ENG410-15: Selected Studies in Literary Genre: Celluloid Best Sellers

M-Th 7:30 - 10:20 am in Murphy 119

Instructor: Dr. Donaher
Office: Eder Hall 222 L
Office Hours: Monday-Thursday 10:30-11:30 am
Phone: 816-271-5964
Email: donaher@missouriwestern.edu
URL: <http://staff.missouriwestern.edu/~donaher>

Course Philosophy and Objectives

What are you READING in your spare time? What are you WATCHING in your spare time? Odds are that you are reading and watching contemporary best sellers, works that are extremely popular, for one reason or another. This course explores both best sellers and their film adaptations as literary works within the context of their genres, as we attempt to answer the question: Is the book always better than the movie?

In general, we will endeavor to:

- Develop working definitions of the various genres we study.
- Analyze the film adaptations in the light of their cultural (i.e., social, political, historical, philosophical, economic, religious, and literary) backgrounds.
- Employ a variety of critical approaches, ranging from biographical and historical to feminist and cultural to psychological and archetypal.
- Learn about and do literary scholarship, including writing bibliographies and researched essays and using MLA documentation
- Formulate oral and written critical arguments about texts informed by both close readings of the texts and by our research.

I see the course developing the following structures: on most days, we will view a film adaptation, followed by a discussion and analysis of the film and its genre. On the other days, we will use the first half of class to dissect the novels we are reading and the second half to learn more about literary scholarship. On the concluding class day, we will concentrate on finishing up our papers and reviewing for the final exam.

Required Materials

Texts:

- Brown, Dan. The DaVinci Code. NY: Anchor, 2006.
- Fleming, Ian. Thunderball. NY: Penguin (non-classics), 2003.
- King, Stephen. The Shining. NY: Pocket. Reissue, 2001.
- Rowling, J. K. Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone. NY: Scholastic, 1999.
- The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. 6th ed. MLA, 2003.
- Various library and online texts assigned in class or as a part of your writing and research.

Other:

- Good humor, exuberance, a "happy to be here" attitude
- Computer disks or flash drives
- Photocopies of your work and various sources

Assignments

Daily Work

Your first responsibility is to read the texts and view the films carefully and come to class to share your wisdom. We will also complete a number of short research assignments in which you will have an opportunity to shine.

Critical Research Portfolio and Paper

Each student will compile a research portfolio and write a 6-7 page critical researched essay on either one of the films and/or texts used in class or on another film adaptation approved by instructor. Papers will be formally written and documented, in MLA Style, and be well edited, as befits all academic papers.

Final Exam

The final exam will include questions about MLA format, quote identification of the films and texts, some quote explication, and a short essay in which you do a close reading and analysis a selected film and text. I will endeavor to craft a final exam that should not unduly stress anyone who has kept up with the course work. Broad, unabashed hints about what to expect will be sprinkled liberally throughout the course.

Have Fun

And I mean it.

Grading

The quality of your work, the percentage of the work that you complete, and your effort will determine your final grade.

Your Final Grade Distribution is as follows:

- Daily Work = 10%
- Critical Research Portfolio and Paper = 50%
- Final Exam = 40%

Other Requirements

Attendance and Promptness

Attendance is mandatory. School functions, illness, and personal crisis do not absolve you from your classroom obligations, so while due consideration is given to the student struck by lightning on the way to class, an absence cannot be designated as "excused" or "unexcused"--it simply "is." Because of the condensed nature of summer school, absences should be used only for extreme emergencies. Note that any absences will affect your final grade, as you are not here to participate or turn in your work. Chronic lateness will count toward this total.

You should note, however, that mere attendance does not mean you will pass the course. You must perform adequately on the tasks required and show initiative in completing the course requirements.

If I should be unable to meet class due to an emergency, you will be notified by a secretary or fellow instructor. Be sure to note any assignments due upon my return.

Participation And Preparation

You will be expected to make significant contributions to the class in the form of participation and preparation. Participation includes the contributions you make to class discussion and the effort you make to be a part of our discourse community. Preparation includes doing the daily readings as assigned, as well as engaging exuberantly in our activities. Keep in mind that live classroom discussion

- gives you practice arguing with others respectfully and professionally
- gives you opportunities to formulate applications of principles
- gives you prompt feedback on difficult or confusing issues and material
- increases your retention of material through explaining, summarizing, and questioning.

Sharing Your Work

Students are expected to share their writings and other work with members of the course, and all work that a student produces may be shared by the instructor with the class for purposes of example and training. Such work will be as anonymous as possible. Finally, the instructor may share your work anonymously with future classes or in her own writing and research.

Classroom Courtesy

You are expected to be courteous and respectful in all of their exchanges with the instructor and other students. We, as students of English studies, should be particularly careful to note how tone and language contribute to the overall impression of our words. The college expects all students to conduct themselves so as to maintain an effective environment for learning, to act responsibly in accordance with good taste, and to respect fully the rights of others.

Student Disability

Any student in this course who has a disability that prevents the fullest expression of abilities must contact me on the first class day so that we can discuss class requirements.

Late Work

All assignments are due at the beginning of the hour on the due date, unless otherwise specified. Learning is a cumulative process and each assignment in this course is designed to build on the last assignment; therefore, late work disrupts this important aspect of the learning process. Because of our short summer schedule, no late work can be accepted, including the critical paper. All work for the course must be turned in by the last class day.

Computer Usage

You will be called upon to read materials online and use computers in and outside of class time. We will post our papers online to facilitate sharing. Further, the final paper for this course must be word processed.

Plagiarism

. . . it is better to fail in originality than to succeed in imitation. -- Herman Melville

Plagiarism is literally the stealing of others' words and ideas and using them as your own. Make every effort to give credit where credit is due, and if you are not sure of "how"--ask. You are responsible for proving that all work turned in for grading is their own original work. Papers with evidence of plagiarism will receive a zero and will result in failure of the course. Other forms of academic dishonesty, like cheating, will also result in failure of the course.

Final Thoughts

Despite Einstein's assurances that even the motions of dust motes have pattern, life to us mere mortals is unpredictable. I recognize that at times your outside life may interfere with your classroom life. It is up to you to set your priorities and to realize that "doing it all" is not always possible or even desirable. If you are feeling overly stressed about all you have to accomplish, you need to come see me.

Course Schedule

Mon, 6/5

Introduction to literary scholarship

Guest lecture: Dr. Roberts on the history of film and the adaptation of Philip K. Dick's Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?

Tues, 6/6

Film: Blade Runner

Weds, 6/7

Film: The Handmaid's Tale

Thurs, 6/8

Film: Bridget Jones' Diary

Library Assignment #1Due

Mon, 6/12

Text: The Da Vinci Code

More on literary scholarship

Tues, 6/13

Film: Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil

Weds, 6/14

Film: Thunderball
Library Assignment #2 Due

Thurs, 6/15

Text: Thunderball

Mon, 6/19

Film: The Shining

Tues, 6/20

Text: The Shining
Avoiding Plagiarism, Using Quotations
Academic Paragraphing

Weds, 6/21

Film: Interview with a Vampire
Research Portfolio Due

Thurs, 6/22

Film: The Silence of the Lambs

Mon, 6/26

Film: Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone

Tues, 6/27

Text: Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone
Academic Paragraphing, redux

Weds, 6/28

Review of MLA Documentation Style
Work on Final Papers

Thurs, 6/29

Critical Papers Due
Final Exam