

Final Paper Assignment
Interpretation of Literature: “Literary Classics Adapted”
Instructor Jennifer Yirinec

For the final paper, you'll be putting your critical reading and writing skills to work as you discuss a film adaptation of one of the three main texts we're reading in class (*Hamlet*, *Frankenstein*, or *Wuthering Heights*) in relation to that text. You can choose the adaptation yourself—it can be one on the list I've provided at the end of the syllabus or it can be an adaptation not listed. If it is not listed on the syllabus, I would like you to run the title you've chosen by me first—in person or via email. And I would prefer you to not work with one of the adaptations we've discussed at length in class.

Argument

This 10-12 page double-spaced paper requires you to make an argument about how the film adaptation you've chosen reimagines the originary text in a particular way. To do this, you will have to provide a brief analysis of the literary text to prove that whatever element, theme, message, or viewpoint you're tracing in the adaptation has some counterpoint in the literary work. The second portion of your essay should discuss how this element, theme, message, or viewpoint is re-interpreted in the adaptation. And third and perhaps most important part of the essay asks you to consider *why* this change was made—in other words, how it affects the meaning of the originary text. You could take one of two routes for this third section: (1) you could consider the change in light of a more modern audience or (2) you could just discuss why you think the director and/or screenwriter made the adaptive choices he or she did. For the first option, you would have to conduct historical research about the era of the originary text's publication and potentially about the decade in which the adaptation was released. You would need to know what topics were being debated when the text was published or performed as well as how those topics have evolved to then suggest how the film adaptation makes certain changes to appeal to a different audience preoccupied with slightly different concerns.

For example, let's say you wanted to write about Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and Michael Almereyda's *Hamlet* and you wanted to write about how each text incorporates the subject of surveillance but ultimately handles it differently. You would have to first determine what Shakespeare is saying about surveillance—what theme/message he is communicating about it—and then determine what Almereyda is saying about surveillance. You can't just say each incorporates surveillance and merely say that the surveillance takes on different forms; you need to consider how surveillance functions in the text as a whole. Then, you might perform some historical research to see why Shakespeare might have felt that way about surveillance or spying. And you could look through news sites to see what was being said at the turn of the millennium about (corporate) oversight to then determine why Almereyda made the adaptive choices that he did.

Conversation

You will need to incorporate a total of **four outside sources** into your paper. All of them must be *credible* and *relevant*, and at least two of the sources should be critical

interpretations of either the literary text or the film adaptation. The other two could either be additional film/literary analysis texts or could be historical pieces. To find critical sources on your topic, I recommend looking at the databases available to you via the library's website like *JSTOR*, *Project Muse*, *MLA International Bibliography*, and *Worldcat*. You might also consider *Google Scholar*. You could use a mixture of books and articles, but all of them must be credible (not personal websites, not *Wikipedia*, not blogs, etc.).

Formatting

The paper should be formatted according to MLA guidelines (see paper formatting policy): double-spaced, heading and header, title, works cited page, in-text citations, Times New Roman 12-point font with 1" margins all around.

Paper Proposal

Before writing the rough draft of the final paper, you will need to compose a formal paper proposal, which entails a one-page double-spaced summary of your argument. The purpose of the proposal is to force you to articulate your argument before you begin writing so that you and I can assess the validity and manageability of your paper topic. The proposal should include the following: (1) your working thesis statement, (2) a discussion of the subclaims you plan to use to support this thesis statement, and (3) at least two annotated sources (out of the four that are required) to demonstrate the research you've conducted thus far.

Peer Review Workshop Day

We will also be conducting in-class peer review to help with the revision and editing process. Although completed during class time, the peer review assignment is counted as a homework grade because it is extremely important for your peers to receive your constructive feedback on their papers. On the peer review workshop day, you must bring **3 hard copies** of your paper to class. All rough drafts and final drafts should be submitted to ICON by class time on their due dates.

Major Dates

- **Paper Proposal** Due to ICON: Thursday, April 10 (class time)
- **Rough Draft Due** (ICON & bring 3 hard copies to class): Thursday, April 24 (class time)
- **Final Draft Due** (ICON only): Tuesday, May 6
- **Final Paper Presentations:** Tuesday, May 6 and Thursday, May 8