

Huron University College
Department of English
English 3333E
Forms of Adaptation: A Critical Making Course
Dr. Scott Schofield
Dr. John Vanderheide

Class: Tues. 1:30-2:30, Thurs. 12:30-2:30 HUC W8

Office:

Schofield: V129

Vanderheide: A203

Office Hours:

Schofield: 2:30-3:30 T/TH

Vanderheide: 12:30-1:30 T, 11:30-12:30TH

Email:

Schofield: sschofi4@uwo.ca

Vanderheide: jvande29@uwo.ca

Prerequisite(s): At least 60% in 1.0 of any 1000-level English course, or permission of the Department.

General Course Description

An event-based course where students disseminate their ideas in a public forum. Possible examples may include: an undergraduate conference, a dramatic performance, a community-based roundtable, an interactive website.

Specific Focus:

In this team-taught “event-based” course, students combine traditional reading and researching in literary and cultural studies with a community-based research and “critical making” component. The core theme of the course is ADAPTATION, and its centrality in literary history and modern culture. Exploring different forms of adaptation in a variety of literary, theoretical and other texts, students will engage in traditional and community-based research and a number of possible critical making activities. Our study of forms of textual adaptation will revolve around T.S. Eliot’s classic modernist poem, *The Waste Land*. On the one hand, *The Waste Land* remains shocking in its unprecedented newness, in its strange and difficult mix of voices and narratives. But on the other, the poem is self-consciously traditional, an unconventional adaptation of the literary and theological traditions of Indo-European civilization: everything from ancient Greek mythology, Judeo-Christian and Hindu Scriptures, medieval Grail legend and all the way to texts of modern philosophy and politics. Students will also explore how Eliot’s own adaptations of these texts and these early traditions differ from both his predecessors such as Ovid or Shakespeare, his contemporaries such as Joyce, or later writers such as Eileen Myles, Margaret Atwood and Derek Walcott. Part of the research into the “after-history” of the poem will very likely involve the examination, critique and adaptation of a recent digital app of Eliot’s poem

produced by Faber and Faber. Students may study and critique the app, and make use of these critiques when building their own digital adaptations.

- Our study of media adaptation (such as the adaptation of literature to cinematic and digital media) will take as its starting point Walter Benjamin's important essays, such as "The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility," as well as his massive, unfinished lifework *The Arcades Project*, the style of which in many ways resembles Eliot's own method of adaptation by fragmented citation. In talking about media adaptation, Benjamin very often bring up the matter of imitation and copying both in his writings on media adaptation and organic adaptation. Students can thus expect to explore the linkages between imitation and the different form of adaptation: organic, textual, media.

Course Learning Objectives

Successful students who complete the course will:

- Develop a critical understanding of T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*: its cultural significance, its place in literary history, its reception in literary criticism, its adapted sources and poetic techniques
- Develop a critical understanding of the scope and significance of practices of textual and media adaptation in general, in cultures of the past and our own
- Apply this understanding of adaptation in making and performing adaptations of their own
- Develop a critical understanding of the place of the humanities within the digital realm and the place of the digital within the humanities
- Apply knowledge gained from critique of digital products to construct a digital archive on a literary work, figure or movement
- Develop their presentation skills in a formal context

Description of Class Methods

Classes will vary throughout the year. In the fall, students may expect some lectures, but a great deal more of guided discussions of the course material. In the winter, students may expect more classes devoted to workshops on their group critical making project.

Students are expected to turn off their cell phones and other electronic devices during class **unless for class related purposes**. Any student who distracts the instructor or other students in class, and especially in screening, by idle cell-phone usage will be asked to leave the classroom or the screening. Students are encouraged to come to office hours or if that is not possible to make other arrangements to discuss course material, the course project, exams, etc.

Textbooks and Other Required Resources

Required Reading

Atwood, Margaret. *The Penelopiad* (Canongate)

Baudelaire, Charles. *Flowers of Evil* (selections provided)

Benjamin, Walter. Selected writings (pdfs provided)

Eliot, T.S. *The Waste Land* (Norton Critical Edition)
Middleton, Thomas & William Rowley. *The Changeling* (New Mermaids)
Myles, Eileen. *Inferno (A Poet's Novel)*
Walcott, Derek. *Omeros* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux)

Recommended Reading

Dante, *Inferno* (Farar, Straus and Giroux)
Homer, *Odyssey* (pdf provided)
Joyce, James. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (Oxford University Press)
Ovid. *Metamorphoses* (Norton Critical Edition)
Shakespeare, William. *Coriolanus* (New Oxford Shakespeare—Oxford Scholarship Online)
Woolf, Virginia. *A Room of One's Own* (Mariner)

Further Recommendations

Eliot, T.S. *The Waste Land* TouchPress App (available through iTunes)

Schedule of Readings and Lectures

TERM 1

Week 1: Introduction to the Course

Sept 6: Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility"

Week 2: The Waste Land

Sept 11, 13: T.S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*

Week 3: Eliot Criticism

Sept 18: "Tradition and the Individual Talent"

Sept 20: "Middleton," "Ulysses, Order, Myth"

Week 4: *The Changeling*

Sept 25, 27: Middleton & Rowley, *The Changeling*

Week 5: Weldon Archives, *Coriolanus*

Oct 2: Trip to Weldon to view Eliot collection

Oct 4: Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*

FALL READING BREAK (OCT 8-12)

Week 6: Eliot's Tradition

Oct 16, 18: Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*

Week 7: Eliot's Tradition

Oct 23, 25: Ovid, *Metamorphoses* (selections)

Week 8: Eliot's Tradition

Oct 30, Nov 1: Dante, *Inferno* (selections)

Week 9: Eliot's Tradition

Nov 6: Baudelaire, *Flowers of Evil* (selections)

Nov 8: Eliot, "Baudelaire"; Benjamin, "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire"

Week 10: Eliot's Contemporaries

Nov 13, 15: Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

Week 11: Eliot's Contemporaries

Nov 20, 22: Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

Week 12: Eliot's Inheritors

Nov 27, 29: Myles, *Inferno (A Poet's Novel)*

Week 13: Eliot's Contemporaries

Dec 4, 6: Myles, *Inferno (A Poet's Novel)*

TERM 2

Week 1: Intro to the Project, Eliot's Tradition

Jan 8: Introduction to the critical making project

Jan 10: Homer, *Odyssey* (selections)

Week 2: Eliot's Tradition

Jan 15, 17: Homer, *Odyssey*

Week 3: New Adaptations

Jan 22, 24: Atwood, *Penelopiad*

Week 4: New Adaptations

Jan 29, 31: Atwood, *Penelopiad*

Week 5: New Adaptations

Feb 5, 7: Walcott, *Omeros*

Week 6: New Adaptations

Feb 12, 14: Walcott, *Omeros*

SPRING READING BREAK (FEB 18-22)

Week 7: Eliot's Contemporaries

Feb 26, 28: Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*

Week 8: Critical Making

Mar 5, 7: Group Project Workshop

Week 9: Critical Making

Mar 12, 14: Group Project Workshop

Week 10: Critical Making

Mar 19, 21: Group Project Workshop

Week 11: Critical Making

Mar 26, 28: Group Project Workshop

Week 12: Critical Making

Apr 2, 4: Group Project Workshop

Week 13: Critical Making

Apr 9, 11: Conclusion

Method of Evaluation and Assessment**FALL TERM**

Assignment	Due	Weight
Primary Doc Analysis	Thursday Nov 1	15%
Attendance/ Participation	Ongoing	10%

WINTER TERM

Assignment	Due	Weight
Research essay	Jan 15	20%
Penelopiad Reflection	Jan 31	5%
Group Assignment	Feb 14 (App Critique) Mar 14 (These Fragments) Apr 2 (Performing The Waste Land)	40%
Attendance/ Participation	Ongoing	20%

Attendance and Participation

Attendance and participation multiply perspectives and enrich the educational experience for all. *If you miss more than nine hours of class meetings per term (the equivalent of two weeks of class meetings), your attendance & participation grade will be forfeited automatically.* Participation means having engaged the readings and being prepared to discuss them in class.

Assignments:

1. **Blog Post:** We will be seeing *The Penelopiad* by Margaret Atwood, a work that we are studying in the course. Following the production, you will be required to produce one 500-700-word blog post relating to the work and how it has been adapted. The posts should be critical (i.e. they should take a stance) and specific. Posts might examine a character, a scene, an issue of setting or staging. They might also consider a concept, theory or idea from class and how it relates to part of the production. Students unable to attend the performance will be given a related blog post assignment due the same day. **(5%)**

2. **Primary Doc Analysis (1000 words):** For this assignment, you will write a short analysis of primary materials from the Eliot collection in Western's Archives. Various options for this assignment include: a comparison of different editions; an examination of the various artists, printers and makers of the early imprints; a comparison of Eliot's poem with other modernist works. More details to follow. **(15%)**

3. **Essay (Due: January 15th):** Students will write a comparative essay of **2000 words** in MLA format. Essays must focus on material taught from the first term and engage with the larger themes in the course. A list of questions will be made available by early October.

(20%)

4. **The Adaptable Archive:** In line with the course mandate, students working in groups of four or five will work towards a final critical making assignment, which they will then present in a public forum at Huron at the end of the second term. This year, groups will create digital archives which are both inspired by and engage with T.S. Eliot's famous poem *The Waste Land*. The archive, which will be produced in WordPress, and housed on HuronResearch.ca, will be the central focus of the second term. This Adaptable Archive gets its name as it is produced iteratively, in stages, and so regularly adapted throughout the term.

a. **Rethinking the app.** The award-winning TouchPress app of *The Waste Land* reminds us of the potential for how we might read, arrange and explore literature in a post-digital age. In this first part of this assignment, groups will begin by critiquing the TouchPress app, evaluating the app's design, content and usability. The critique, which you will upload on your group's site, should be 1000 words. **Due Feb 1**

b. **These Fragments:** One of the central features of *The Waste Land* is its use of fragments and allusions from various literary works throughout history. Such a gathering is not unique to Eliot, but in line with much of Modernism's various aesthetics. For this part of the assignment, you will build your own, modernist-inspired digital pastiche, using fragments from the various course works and writings in conjunction with related images and video. The end product should be in the form of a gallery. A 500-word rationale should accompany this section of the site. **Due Mar 7.**

c. **Performing *The Waste Land*:** In the spirit of Fiona Shaw's reading of *The Waste Land* as seen on the TouchPress app, you will build and record your own performance of Part 3 of *The Waste Land* (i.e. The Fire Sermon). Students should stage at least part of their recorded performance at Huron. Once complete, the final productions will be staged. **Due Mar 28.**

Total Grade for Group Assignment (40%)

Late Policy

All assignments are due by the end of class on the due date and should be handed to the instructor personally. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the instructor receives the essay.

Late assignments will be penalized at the rate of 2 marks per calendar day until the instructor receives the essay. *Normally, late assignments will receive a grade but no detailed commentary.*

After 7 days, the assignment will not be accepted and a mark of 0/F will be awarded.

Students must pass *both* term work and the final examination (if there is one) in order to pass the course. Students who fail the term work are not allowed to take the final examination. Students who fail the final examination (regardless of their term work) automatically fail the course.



The Appendix to Course Outlines is posted on the OWL course site.