

English 766: Adapting the 18th-Century

Professor Francus

Spring 2024

Mondays, 4:00-6:50

G-18 Colson Hall

Office: 227 Colson Hall

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 11:00-12:15, and by appointment.

E-Mail: mfrancus@mix.wvu.edu (alternate: Marilyn.Francus@mail.wvu.edu)

Welcome to English 766. This semester, we will be studying a number of contemporary works that represent and adapt 18th-century history and culture. The historical turn has been popular and lucrative: *Hamilton* on Broadway; *Bridgerton*, *Outlander*, *Sanditon*, and *Poldark* on television; the *Pirates of the Caribbean* film series, and all the Austen films, provide ready examples of this phenomenon. These works raise questions about history and adaptation, and the ways that history is appropriated for modern purposes that we will explore this semester. Some food for thought:

How does the present engage with the past? How does the present rewrite or re-invent the past? What are the purposes—or goals—in envisioning (or re-envisioning) the past?

How are national narratives and stereotypes reinforced or changed by these works?

How does multiracial casting shape these works?

How do these works shape contemporary discourse regarding politics, race, class, and gender?

While these questions are not limited to modern adaptations of the 18th century—they hold for adaptations of other historical periods as well—we will use the 18th century as a framework to analyze this cultural phenomenon.

Course Objectives:

- To create a supportive learning environment, in which students can be curious and comfortable, and thrive and grow
- To study and analyze methods of adaptation
- To study and analyze the intersection of adaptation, history, and historiography
- To study and analyze the ways that adaptation shapes contemporary culture regarding class, race, and gender
- To introduce students to fan studies
- To provide practice in academic research and writing

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

- Explain and analyze adaptation as a method of cultural understanding and production
- Explain and analyze the intersection between history and adaptation, including the ways that modern culture adapts history for its own ideological purposes
- Explain and analyze the effects of adaptation on the popular understanding of historical events, as well as the impact of adaptation on contemporary understanding of race, class, and gender.
- Write a proposal for a research paper, presentation, or alt. media product.
- Prepare an annotated bibliography to organize a research project.
- Write a thesis-driven research paper suitable for presentation at an academic conference or submission to a journal, and/or develop a creative or alt media production that synthesizes research and analysis in a creative format.

Note: All films are available on reserve through WVU Libraries, with the exception of *Bridgerton*, which we will watch in class.

Note: All readings are available on eCampus. (I have included additional readings and materials on eCampus as well).

Course Schedule:

January 8 (Monday): Introduction

January 15 (Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – University closed)

January 22 (Monday): *Pirates of the Caribbean* (2003)

Claire Monk, “The Heritage Film Debate: From Textual Critique to Audience,” *Heritage Film Audiences: Period Films and Contemporary Audiences in the UK* (Edinburgh UP, 2011) pp. 10-28.

Stuart Hall, “Whose Heritage? Un-settling ‘The Heritage’, Re-imagining the Post-nation,” *Whose Heritage? Challenging Race and Identity in Stuart Hall’s Post-Nation Britain*, ed. Susan L.T. Ashley and Degna Stone (Routledge, 2023), pp. 13-25.

Carolyn Jess-Cooke, “Sequelizing Spectatorship and Building Up the Kingdom: The Case of *Pirates of the Caribbean*, Or, How a Theme-Park Attraction Spawned a Multibillion-dollar Franchise,” *Second Takes: Critical Approaches to the Film Sequel*, ed. Carolyn Jess-Cooke and Constantine Verevis (SUNY Press, 2010), pp. 205-223.

Anne Petersen, “‘You Believe in Pirates, Of course...’: Disney’s Commodification and ‘Closure’ vs. Johnny Depp’s Aesthetic Piracy of *Pirates of the Caribbean*,” *Studies in Popular Culture*, Vol. 29 #2 (2007) pp. 63-81.

January 29 (Monday): *Stage Beauty* (2004)

Cameron McFarlane, “‘What the trick in that?’ Performing Gender and History in *Stage Beauty*,” *Journal of Popular Culture*, Vol. 44 # 4 (2011), pp. 796-814.

Sarah Martindale, “Shakespearean film as art cinema: stage beauty as a cerebral retort to Hollywood,” *British Art Cinema: Creativity, Experimentation and Innovation* (Manchester UP, 2019), pp. 243-258.

February 5 (Monday): *The Favourite* (2018)

Linda Hutcheon, “Beginning to Theorize Adaptation,” *A Theory of Adaptation*, 2nd edition (New York: Routledge, 2012), pp. 1-32.

Serra Inan and Ayça Tunç Cox, “The Queen’s Body,” *Film International* Vol. 20 #1-2 (March-June 2022), pp. 27-42.

February 12 (Monday): *The Madness of King George* (1994)

Miriam Burstein, "'I Have Remembered How to Seem': The Symbolic Monarchy after *King George*," *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* vol. 32 #2 (2015), pp. 162-178.

Joseph H. O'Mealy, "Royal Family Values: The Americanization of Alan Bennett's *The Madness of George III*," *Literature/Film Quarterly* Vol. 27 #2 (1999), pp. 90-96.

February 19 (Monday): *1776* (1972)

Elissa Harbert, "'Ever to the Right'? The Political Life of *1776* in the Nixon Era," *American Music*, Vol. 35 #2 (Summer 2017), pp. 237-270.

Thomas Leitch, "Twelve Fallacies in Contemporary Adaptation Theory," *Criticism*, Vol. 45 #2 (2003), pp. 149-171.

February 26 (Monday): *Hamilton* (2015)

Elizabeth Titrington Craft, "Headfirst into an Abyss: The Politics and Politic Reception of *Hamilton*," *American Music*, vol. 36 #4 (Winter 2018), pp. 429-447.

Philip Goldfarb Styr, "Toward a Historicism of Setting: *Hamilton* and American History," *Modern Drama*, Vol. 61, #1 (Spring 2018), pp. 1-18.

Loren Kajikawa, "'Young, Scrappy, and Hungry': *Hamilton*, Hip Hop, and Race," *American Music*, vol. 36 #4 (Winter 2018), pp. 467-486

March 4 (Monday): *Marie Antoinette* (2006)

Rachel V. Cote, "Tell It Slant: the Rise of Feminist Anachronistic Drama," *Virginia Quarterly Review*, Vol. 97 #1 (2021), pp. 146-153.

Dorothee Polanz, "Portrait of the Queen as a Celebrity: Marie Antoinette on Screen, a Disappearing Act (1934-2012)," *The Cinematic Eighteenth Century: History, Culture, and Adaptation*, ed. Srividhya Swaminathan and Steven W. Thomas (New York: Routledge, 2017), pp. 28-43

Final Project Proposal due

March 11-15 (Spring Break)

March 18 (Monday): *Belle* (2013)

Sarah Louise Smyth, “‘I do not know that I find myself anywhere’: The British Heritage Film and Spaces of Intersectionality in Amma Asante’s *Belle* (2013)” in *Media Crossroads: Intersections of Space and Identity in Screen Cultures*, ed. Paula J. Massood, Angel Daniel Matos, and Pamela Robertson Wojcik (Duke UP, 2021), pp. 195-205.

Steven W. Thomas, “Cinematic Slavery and the Romance of *Belle*,” *The Cinematic Eighteenth Century: History, Culture, and Adaptation*, ed. Srividhya Swaminathan and Steven W. Thomas (New York: Routledge, 2017), pp. 170-186.

March 25 (Monday): *Amazing Grace* (2006)

Hughey, Matthew W. “The White Savior Films: The Content of their Character,” *The White Savior Film* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2014) pp. 18-71.

Waterton, Emma et. al. “Forgetting to Heal: Remembering the Abolition Act of 1807,” *European Journal of English Studies*, Vol. 14 #1 (2010), pp. 23-36.

Annotated Bibliography due

April 1 (Monday): *Bridgerton* (2020+)

Watch Season 1, Episode 1 in class

Amber Davisson and Kyra Hunting, “From Private Pleasure to Erotic Spectacle: Adapting *Bridgerton* to Female Audience Desires,” *Journal of Popular Television* Vol. 11 (April 2023), pp. 7-25.

Amy M. Froide, “The History Behind *Bridgerton*,” *Journal of Popular Television* Vol. 11 (April 2023), pp. 55-60.

Henry Jenkins, “How Texts Become Real,” *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture* (1992; rpt. Taylor and Francis, 2012) pp. 50-85.

April 8 (Monday): Final paper in-class workshop

Draft of introduction and outline of Final Research Project Due

April 15 (Monday): **Final Research Project (in-process) presentations**

April 22 (Monday): No class – Passover

April 28: (Sunday): **Final Research Project due** (via email)

Changes may be made in the schedule by the instructor based on class needs.

Course Assignments:

Comments for Class (10%): For each session that we are discussing a film (and there are ten sessions), please bring a comment for class discussion. Your comment can be a question about the film, the readings, adaptation, or history; your comment can be an observation about the film, or about a related film or media, or about anything that you are interested in. Please bring a physical copy of your comment to class; I will collect the comments, and we will use them to guide class discussion.

Comments after Class (10%): After each session that we are discussing a film (and there are ten sessions), please email me a comment by Friday at noon. (I will acknowledge receipt of your email). Your comment may be your thoughts about something that we did not have time to discuss in class; a thought that was sparked by class discussion once you have had some more time to think about it; or any question that you might have.

Short Critical Paper/Project (20%): You will write either a 4-5 page, thesis-driven paper, or create an alternative format project (e.g., slide show, video, podcast, webinar, zine, TikTok) related to the film and readings for a particular week. (You will pick your week during the first class.) Your paper/project should address the assigned film, and at least one assigned secondary text for that week (you may address additional texts, if you choose). Papers and projects should follow the conventions of academic writing, including proper quotation and citation format. You will be the point-person for discussion that week, so prepare to present your paper/project and have some questions ready. The goals of this assignment include practice choosing a topic, setting parameters of analysis, engaging meaningfully with scholarship, and oral presentation.

Final Project Proposal (15%): To support your final research essay/project, you will be asked to submit a proposal for your final research project. Your proposal should include your thesis, the parameters of your project, your postulated argument, your critical approach, and relevant scholarship. The goals of this assignment include providing practice in choosing a topic, setting parameters of analysis, and practicing developing a viable plan for a literary analysis for an article-length research paper or project.

Final Project Annotated Bibliography (15%): To help organize your research for your final project, you will be asked to submit an annotated bibliography of 10 sources (minimum), which should include books, book chapters, journal articles, websites, or other relevant media on your topic. Brief annotations of 2-3 sentences summarize the subject, thesis, methodology, and arguments of each source, as well as the anticipated usefulness of this source for your project. The goals of this assignment include: providing practice in locating peer-reviewed scholarship and reliable materials for research papers and projects; writing focused synopses of scholarship and materials; and determining the relevance of resources for your work.

Final Research Project Draft (required, not graded; 0%): For an in-class writing workshop, you will be asked to submit a draft of your final research essay to me, and bring another copy to class for peer-review. Your draft should include your introduction (with your thesis), and the basics of your argument. The goals of this assignment are to provide you with feedback from me and your peers to enhance your final essay, and to ensure that you are progressing on your final research paper.

Final Research Project (in process) Presentations (required, not graded; 0%): You will be asked to present your work-in-progress to the class in 5-7 minutes, as if you were on a roundtable at a conference. (So, consider this as an informal presentation). Your presentation should include your comments on your thesis and argument; what you feel your project adds to the academic and/or cultural discussion of the subject; you may bring handouts or use visual aids if you wish. There will be comments and discussion after each presentation.

Final Research Project (30%): You can write a conventional seminar paper (3,750-5,000 words + works cited) or develop an alternative format research project. In either case, your project should be informed by the scholarship, history, and cultural context of your topic. It should synthesize primary and secondary sources for support and enrichment. The goals of this assignment include: providing practice in choosing a topic (and setting parameters of analysis); thinking critically and analytically about adaptation, history, and culture, integrating research into your writing and projects; practicing writing skills according to the conventions of academic writing and research.

Grading:

Comments for Class	10%
Comments after Class	10%
Short Critical Paper/Project:	20%
Final Project Proposal:	15%
Final Project Annotated Bibliography:	15%
Final Research Project:	30%

Please Note: Final Research Project Draft and the Final Research Project Presentation are required, but not graded.

Grading Criteria:

A – Excellent work; the assignment has been completed in a professional and timely manner. The assignment is clearly organized, has chosen compelling evidence to substantiate the analysis, and engages with the subject at hand in a thoughtful and thought-provoking manner. Written work requires no substantive or stylistic revisions.

B – Good work; the assignment has been completed in a professional and timely manner. The assignment show substantial engagement with the subject at hand, but the analysis is either partially incomplete, involves weak evidence, or manifests some difficulty with organization. Written work requires substantive revisions, but few or no stylistic ones.

C – Average work; the assignment has been completed, but not necessarily in a professional or timely manner. The assignment show effort by the student, but the analysis is incomplete, includes inappropriate evidence (or a lack of evidence), or shows significant difficulties with organization. Written work requires significant substantive or stylistic revisions.

D - Less than average work; the assignment has not been completed in a professional or timely manner. The assignment show a lack of effort on the part of the student, and a lack of engagement. Written assignments lack analysis, evidence, and organization; extensive substantive and stylistic revisions are necessary.

F – Inadequate work; the assignment has not been completed. Assignments, when submitted, show a significant lack of effort on the part of the student, and a lack of engagement with the assignment and the subject matter of the course. Such work is marked by the absence of analysis, evidence, and organization; engagement with the course materials is necessary before extensive revisions are even possible.

Class Etiquette:

1. Please come to class on time; I will take attendance at the beginning of class. Please do not schedule appointments (medical, advising, etc.) during class time. *Please note:* more than three absences will affect your final grade. University-sanctioned absences and excused absences do not count towards your total absences; for emergency leave or military leave, please see me so that we can accommodate your needs.
2. Please turn off cell phones during class.
3. You will be expected to complete the reading and viewing before coming to class, and to bring the relevant text (accessible online via computer) to class, since we will often be analyzing text and film in detail in class.
4. If you send me an e-mail, I will respond within 24 or 48 hours. If I have not responded in that time, then I have not received your posting. Please e-mail me again. If there is a time when I cannot respond to email, I will let the class know in advance.
5. Please check your email regularly—not only for course correspondence, but University announcements. If I send you an email, please acknowledge my email in a timely fashion. Thank you.
6. Please do not send an email in all caps, because it reads like you are shouting. Thank you.

Health and Welfare

The Office of Student Life in E. Moore Hall:

Website: <https://studentlife.wvu.edu/>

Email: studentlife@mail.wvu.edu

Phone: 304-293-5811

The Carruth Center:

Phone: 304-293-4431

Crisis Text Line: 741741

Website: <https://carruth.wvu.edu/>

Tech Support:

Email: ITShelp@mail.wvu.edu

Phone: 304-293-4444 or Toll Free: 1-877-327-9260

The Student Advocacy Center:

Website: <https://campuslife.wvu.edu/student-advocacy>

Student Help Line: 304-293-5555

Voter Registration:

<https://www.usa.gov/register-to-vote>

The Rack: WVU Food Pantry:

<https://studentengagement.wvu.edu/the-rack-student-food-pantry>

University Policies:

WVU Attendance Policy:

<http://catalog.wvu.edu/undergraduate/enrollmentandregistration/#enrollmenttext>

Academic Dishonesty Statement:

West Virginia University's definition of academic dishonesty is available at

<http://catalog.wvu.edu/undergraduate/coursecredittermsclassification/#academicdishonestytext>

WVU Academic Integrity Statement:

West Virginia University's Academic Integrity Statement is available at

<https://tlcommons.wvu.edu/syllabus-policies-and-statements#academicintegrity> :

Student Evaluation of Instruction Statement:

West Virginia University's Student Evaluation of Instruction Statement is available at :

<https://tlcommons.wvu.edu/syllabus-policies-and-statements#studenteval>

Inclusivity Statement:

West Virginia University's Inclusive Statement is available at

<https://tlcommons.wvu.edu/syllabus-policies-and-statements#inclusivity> :

Sexual Misconduct Statement:

West Virginia University's Sexual Misconduct Statement is available at

<https://tlcommons.wvu.edu/syllabus-policies-and-statements#sexualmisconduct> :

“West Virginia University does not tolerate sexual misconduct, including harassment, stalking, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, or relationship violence [[BOG Rule 1.6](#)]. It is important for you to know that there are resources available if you or someone you know needs assistance. You may speak to a member of university administration, faculty, or staff; keep in mind that they have an obligation to report the incident to the [Title IX Coordinator](#).

If you want to speak to someone who is permitted to keep your disclosure confidential, please seek assistance from the [Carruth Center](#), 304-293-9355 or 304-293-4431 (24-hour hotline), and locally within the community at the [Rape and Domestic Violence Information Center](#) (RDVIC), 304-292-5100 or 304-292-4431 (24-hour hotline).”

For more information, please consult [WVU's Title IX Office](#) (<https://titleix.wvu.edu/resources-offices>).”

Adverse Weather Statement:

West Virginia University's Adverse Weather Commitment is available at

<https://tlcommons.wvu.edu/syllabus-policies-and-statements#weather>: