

ENGL 2237

Adaptations

General Information

Instructor: Sean McAlister youremailaddress@langara.ca (Office:)

Course Times: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:30-12:20

Credits: 3 (for information about transfer credit, visit bctransferguide.ca)

Course Description

To adapt means to change in relation to new circumstances or environments. For Charles Darwin, an adaptation is a heritable trait that might enhance an organism's ability to survive and reproduce. Similarly, world culture has long adapted its forms of expression to new historical and technological circumstances, going back at least as far as Homer's adaptation of oral storytelling to the medium of writing. In this course, we will use the concept of adaptation to consider the different ways stories, characters, and ideas are refashioned or remediated, as well as the ways that newer mediums themselves adapt to, transform, and challenge older mediums. We will begin with Edgar Allan Poe, perhaps the most adapted of all authors, and end with the remediation of another Homer—Homer Simpson—in *Mr. Burns: A Post-Electric Play*. In between, we will consider how various novels, comics, and movies have adapted to new, often rapidly changing, historical contexts and media environments.

Course Texts

- Edgar Allan Poe, selected poems, tales, and adaptations
- Herman Melville, *Billy Budd*
- Clair Denis (dir.), *Beau Travail* (an adaptation of *Billy Budd*)
- Patricia Highsmith, *Strangers on a Train*
- Alfred Hitchcock (dir.), *Strangers on a Train*
- Susan Orlean, "Orchid Fever"
- Spike Jonze (dir.), *Adaptation* (an adaptation of "Orchid Fever")
- *Ms. Marvel* (comic book and TV show)
- *The Simpsons*, selected episodes
- Anne Washburn, *Mr. Burns: A Post-Electric Play*

***course texts are subject to change before the semester begins**