

Translating Prose to Screenplay – Kevin Hanson, office AAC 261, phone 801-581-7428

Office hours: TBD in class; Longer conversations by appointment

Hello All, we're a week from the official beginning of classes on August 21st. Our course, Film 4850-001, Prose to Screenplay, is designated as an "In Person" course. It has also been taught as an online course. So, if there were an emergency this semester, we have the resources to make necessary changes and press on. I am very much expecting that things will go well.

Masks can be a first line of defense when you are around others. Masks will not be required on campus, however; it is important that our campus remain "mask-friendly." Those who still wish to wear masks are encouraged to do so, especially those at high risk of severe illness from COVID-19 or other communicable diseases. I may mask for part of the semester.

Summary:

Prose to Screenplay fulfills the upper-division writing requirement (CW).

This course focuses on the problems of literary adaptation for the screen and particularly on the special structural attributes of the short film and the short story. The class reads short stories and/or portions of novel(s). Then we view film versions of the same stories, both successful and unsuccessful adaptations on film. We talk about character development, setting, form, and structure. We also discuss regionalism and dialect in literature and film. Everyone reads and adapts Octavio Paz's Bouquet of Blue Eyes or an alternative assigned story.

Subsequently, all class members choose a story of their own. They make copies available to the rest of the class. Then we workshop adaptations of our own screenplays and every student creates a filmable script. Projects are geared toward the eventual production of short independent films.

Your work is expected to be formally correct, satisfying as literature, and filmable.

Dates:

There will be no class meeting Tuesday & Thursday, October 10th & 12th (Fall Break). There may be reading or working days during the semester when attendance may be optional.

This course outline includes scheduled events that may be moved or changed as the semester progresses. There is a CANVAS page for the course where revisions will appear as they are made. Watch for those changes. Watch for CANVAS notifications in your email and emails directly from me (check your email account regularly). You will turn in all your assignments through CANVAS and you should log in soon. The CANVAS page will become available before our first meeting.

Students not familiar with Canvas should look at the [Canvas Getting Started Guide for Students](#) which can be helpful.

Learning Outcomes:

1. The successful student will fully understand the special attributes of writing for the screen and will be able to translate prose written as literature to prose and dialog for film and media production. Their skills will include:

A new or enlarged understanding of what is filmable and what is not.

A new or enlarged ability to replace elements of literature that cannot be filmed with equivalent elements.

2. By semester's end, students will create an original adaptation of a story or other work ready to be produced as a short film.

Specifics:

[A more detailed explanation of assignments is available at the course's CANVAS page. Two examples are appended to this document.]

All students will adapt and read their adaptation of a short story of the instructor's choice (usually Octavio Paz's *Bouquet of Blue Eyes*). Classmates and instructors will critic these adaptations in class. You must turn in your adaptation via Canvas by noon the day before it is due in order to get copies of your work made as needed (electronic copies will be provided for students with laptops, iPads, etc.). This short adaptation will be written in correct screenplay form and serve as a model for the student's next adaptation (of choice).

Students may turn in a second draft for an improved grade after incorporating criticism or otherwise altering their original draft.

– 25% of your grade

All students will outline in writing their criticisms (positive and negative) of filmed adaptations seen in class prior to in-class discussions. Your instructor will call on students and direct discussion based on these written outlines. Students will turn in those notes on canvas.

– 12.5% of your grade

All students will complete a final adaptation from a story of their choice. Each student will read their first draft in class. Students will be expected to complete second and third drafts, which we will read in class only if time permits. Your final adaptation for grading purposes will be due on Tuesday, November 21st at 11:59 PM.

– 50% of your grade

All students will read and the required texts including the work of their peers and works chosen by their peers, turn in notes on assigned short stories (s) and regularly attend unless excused for illness or as otherwise pre-arranged with the instructor. Please sign in (only for yourself) each day of class.

– 12.5% of your grade

Details of assignment appear in CANVAS.

Required Texts:

“Love That Dog” by Sharon Creech

From \$6 at: <https://www.betterworldbooks.com/product/detail/love-that-dog-9780756913809> or new \$10 at: <https://www.betterworldbooks.com/product/detail/love-that-dog-9780756913809>

Your instructor is pursuing a bulk order of “Love That Dog”.

Plus:

- various short stories as assigned (see Canvas schedule) — for example: King of the Bingo Game by Ralph Ellison, [Ellison-King_of_the_Bingo_Game.pdf](#)
- The Blue Bouquet by Octavio Paz, [The Blue Bouquet.pdf](#)
- Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge by Ambrose Bierce, [Bierce-Occurance_at_Owl_Creek_Bridge.pdf](#)

Accommodations:

Some of the films, scripts, presentations, or lectures in this course may include material that conflicts with the core beliefs of some students. Most of the scripts we read this semester will be new to both the audience and the instructor and there will be no practical way to predict which scripts (and which discussions following them) might conflict with the individual values of each student. This is a workshop course involving the production of art and the feedback given to each student is essentially the text for this course and the reason most, if not all, of the students are taking the course. We will not be able to avoid talking about things that may make all of us uncomfortable.

– Consider carefully the nature of this course before committing to taking it. Bear in mind that your fellow students and the instructor have no way to make an informed decision about which scripts or comments might be a problem for you.

Policies:

All students are expected to maintain professional behavior in the classroom setting, according to the Student Code, spelled out in the Student Handbook. Students have specific rights in the classroom as detailed in Article III of the Code. The Code also specifies proscribed conduct (Article XI) that involves cheating on tests, plagiarism, and/or collusion, as well as fraud, theft, etc. Students should read the Code carefully and know they are responsible for the content. According to Faculty Rules and Regulations, it is the faculty responsibility to enforce responsible classroom behaviors, and I will do so, beginning with verbal warnings and progressing to dismissal from and class and a failing grade. Students have the right to appeal such action to the Student Behavior Committee.

Your Safety

The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. To report suspicious activity or to request a courtesy escort, call campus police at 801-585-COPS (801-585-2677). You will receive important emergency alerts and safety messages regarding campus safety via text message. For more information regarding safety and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit safeu.utah.edu ([Links to an external site.](#)).

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677(COPS).

Disability:

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations.

1st Adapted Screenplay

✓ Published

 Edit

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Read and discuss the [Octavio Paz](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Octavio_Paz)  (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Octavio_Paz) story, [*The Blue Bouquet.*](https://utah.instructure.com/courses/893832/files/149959013/download?wrap=1) (<https://utah.instructure.com/courses/893832/files/149959013/download?wrap=1>)

Adapt the story into a short screenplay. You may interpret it as written or make your own variation on the story's theme, location, characters, and viewpoint.

Turn in your script as an electronic document--please note the format restrictions under "Submission Type" below.

You must schedule a time-slot to read your adaptation in class. Sign up for a time slot with your instructor in class.

Missed reading appointments will result in reduction of ½ letter grade for the assignment.

On the day before your reading, we will copy the most current draft of your script found online at 5:00 pm and make it available to your classmates. Your classmates will read the script before class and be prepared to read roles as you assign them in class.

Points 25

Submitting a file upload

File Types pdf, pages, doc, docx, rtf, and, and txt

Due	For	Available from	Until
Sep 6 at 12pm	Everyone	Aug 12 at 10am	-



+ Rubric


Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge

✓ Published


 [Edit](#)

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Read [Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge \(https://utah.instructure.com/courses/893832/files/149959094/download?wrap=1\)](https://utah.instructure.com/courses/893832/files/149959094/download?wrap=1), a story by [Ambrose Bierce](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ambrose_Bierce)  (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ambrose_Bierce). The film adaptation is by by Robert Enrico. [Link](https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0257992/?ref_=nv_sr_1?ref_=nv_sr_1)  (https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0257992/?ref_=nv_sr_1?ref_=nv_sr_1)

Watch the film embedded in the frame of a 1964 Twilight Zone episode. At <https://vimeo.com/407669738>  (<https://vimeo.com/407669738>)

Turn in your notes (usually a page or so), written after reading the story and viewing the film. (due 5 pm the day before our discussion) Answer the following questions:

- 1) What elements of the story remained the same in the film adaptation?
- 2) What elements of the story were either eliminated or altered for the film adaptation?
- 3) What is the theme of the original story?
- 4) What is the theme of the film adaptation?
- 5) Do they differ?
- 6) (extra credit) What era and national cinema does the film belong in? Hint within https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0056300/?ref_=nm_flmg_dr_32  (https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0056300/?ref_=nm_flmg_dr_32)

*this second IMDB link is for the film/not the Twilight Zone episode

Points 4.16

Submitting a file upload

File Types doc, docx, pages, pdf, txt, and, and rtf

Due

For

Available from

Until

Aug 23 at 12pm

Everyone

Aug 12 at 3pm

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+ [Rubric](#)