

VISUAL ANALYSIS & THEORY APPLICATION ESSAY

Investigating the Guiding Course Question



Instead of a traditional “midterm” paper, each student will compose an analytical essay that ties to one of the individual texts we are studying, and in particular, compares the source text with a visual adaptation in order to consider our guiding research question:

How do children’s and young adult texts reflect major critical and theoretical concepts differently when they engage various visual mediums?

Graduate Students

Graduate students are encouraged to integrate theoretical elements, delving into the ways that critical reading for the week functions differently in the alphabetic and visual mediums; aka, while graduate essays feature comparison, they do so more fully within the context of the theory.

Undergraduate Students

Undergraduate students complete a focused compare/contrast, identifying a key difference between the novel and its adaptation and writing about the importance of this difference from a theoretical or ideological perspective. Use of criticism and theory is encouraged, but less fully emphasized.

Practice Theoretical Application and Visual Analysis

First, use the google doc link in e-learning to choose what visual text (either a film adaptation or a graphic novel/illustrated text) you will study. Then, compose a 2-4 page essay (4-6 for graduate students) that analyzes that week’s reading by taking visual components and/or adaptations into account. This will typically involve

comparing/contrasting the novel with its adaptation in light of the theoretical reading. The goal of this paper is to apply the critical reading and record observations about how the idea the scholar is presenting works differently in the visual text versus the novel. This is the “application” element of the class, much like a midterm or exam.

What is an Analysis? How Do I Answer my Research Question?

Your analysis should provide an interpretation: a theory/explanation of what something means and an opinion you can support with evidence. This evidence is usually grounded in specific examples and/or quotes from your primary texts, but it also engages with criticism or theory, using what others have written to interpret what you notice or observe in a text.

Usually, this means picking out a key similarity or difference between the source text and its adaptation and exploring why it matters. For graduate students, it also means thinking about how the critical or theoretical reading of the week works differently in these two texts. In both cases, focus on the visual—it is not enough to compare/contrast plot, but your discussion should consider the nature of visual texts and how they are unique from print texts (alphabetic texts).

Interpretation offers more than an observation, however, but also an analysis of **why what you have observed matters**. For example, you might focus on why particular details in the adaptation differ, considering some of the factors that go into movie making or comics, and how this medium differs in terms of cultural/historical context and situation. Or you might discuss ideologies that a text presents about society, thinking about how key differences affect these messages. Your analysis should offer a unique insight, original idea, innovative approach, or new way of looking at the texts you are discussing. In short, you should point out something you've noticed in your study that would not be easily observed by everyone and explain why what you have noticed is important to a deeper understanding



Since our guiding research question in the course focuses in particular on visual elements (more than plot, etc), focus at least some of your discussion on this element, making a claim about how visual and alphabetic texts differ.

Academic Community: Sharing Your Ideas with the Your Colleagues



Be sure to sign up for your individual adaptation in e-learning and note your specific due date for the assignment.

Part of the reason that each person in the class will chose one unique adaptation to study and turn their essay in on the day we talk about that text is so that everyone can play a part in contributing to the overall knowledge building and meaning-making of the course. Thus, your paper should contribute to this—help us to understand and think more deeply about the guiding research question of the course.

Along these lines, please expect to informally share some of your ideas and the work/research you completed for your paper. That way, we can all benefit from you ideas, and you can help to lead our guide some of the ways we think about the visual

This assignment is worth 200 points, or 20% of the final grade.