



Summer Reading & Writing Assignment

The summer assignment for Honors Humanities and Theater consists of reading texts, watching films and videos, and writing four short essays, one for each group of works. These assignments are designed as preparatory work for some of the shows and other encounters we will have during the first semester of this course.

- **Assignment 1: From Stage to Screen (tutorial mode) – *Dial M for Murder* (mid Sept. performance)**
 - **Reading:**
 - *Dial M for Murder* by Frederick Knott (stage play, on Moodle)
 - **Viewing:**
 - *Dial M for Murder* dir. by Alfred Hitchcock (various streaming services)
 - **The Big Idea:** Our first major work will introduce us to the problems and opportunities attendant to adaptation. As befits a first foray, this one will be fairly straightforward: a stage play was adapted by its playwright into a screenplay for an Alfred Hitchcock film.
 - **Essay Prompt:** Given that Knott wrote both the original play and the screenplay adaptation, we can reasonably assume that the film represents the author's vision of how his stage play (mostly two-dimensional, interior proscenium drama) should live in a filmic space (three-dimensional, open-world drama). Therefore, explain how Knott and Hitchcock leverage the elements of film to translate Knott's stage play to Hitchcock's film (note" for purposes of this essay, we will assume that Knott and Hitchcock were in agreement on the final product). [2-3 pages].

- **Assignment 2: Ripped from the Headlines (standard mode) – *Trifles* (early Oct. performance)**
 - **Reading 1:**
 - Selected news and historical articles (on Moodle)
 - **Reading 2:**
 - *Trifles* by Susan Glaspell (stage play, on Moodle)
 - **Reading 3:**
 - "A Jury of Her Peers" by Susan Glaspell (short story, on Moodle)
 - **The Big Idea:** While working as a journalist for the *Des Moines Daily News*, Glaspell reported on the trial of Margaret Hossack, who was arrested for the murder of her husband, John. After writing a series of articles about the trial, she resigned her position and wrote (and later starred in) a play loosely based on the case. The success of the play prompted her to adapt it into a short story.
 - **Essay Prompt:** According to celebrated writer Neil Gaiman, "Fiction is the lie that tells the truth." How does this aphorism apply to Glaspell's work? [2-3 pages].



Saint John Baptist de LaSalle...pray for us! Live Jesus in our hearts...forever!



- **Assignment 3: Into the Funhouse (hard mode)– *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (early Nov. performance)**
 - **Viewing 1:**
 - *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* dir. by Robert Wiene (film, on Moodle)
 - **Reading:**
 - *Shutter Island* by Dennis Lehane (novel, purchase or library loan)
 - **Viewing 2:**
 - *Shutter Island* dir. by Martin Scorsese (film, various streaming services)
 - **The Big Idea:** It is difficult to overstate the influence of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* on modern cinema. For now, we will focus on one case study: Scorsese’s adaptation of Lehane’s novel.
 - **Essay Prompt:** Scorsese has stated multiple times that Weine’s film was his primary inspiration in his adaptation of Lehane’s novel. How does Scorsese remain true to both sources in his film (note: you are not required to argue that he does remain true to both, but if you take a more antagonistic stance to the prompt, be sure to defend your point)? [2-3 pages].

- **Assignment 4: Ad Absurdum (nightmare mode) – *The Inseparables* (mid Nov. performance)**
 - **Reading:**
 - *The Three Musketeers* by Alexander Dumas (novel, on Moodle)
 - **Viewing:**
 - Any ONE film adaptation of the novel (list of 7+ choices on Moodle)
 - **The Big Idea:** Dumas’s classic novel has been adapted multiple times. *The Inseparables* is a metanarrative comedy about a theater group trying to adapt *The Three Musketeers* to the stage.
 - **Essay Prompt:** What is it about this novel that inspires so many artists? Additionally, what aspects of the story do your chosen adaptation seem to focus on? [2-3 pages].

Each essay should be 2-3 pages, double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font. The essays should include quotations from the assigned texts when and where it is appropriate. Cite your quotations parenthetically in MLA style (include a works cited section). These essays must be submitted as separate files to Turnitin.com **by 11:59 PM on Friday, August 30, 2024.**

Any problems, questions, or concerns should be brought to me as they occur so that I can address them speedily.

If you haven’t done so by now, enroll in the class on Moodle and Remind:

Text @hht2425 to the number 81010 or go to <https://www.remind.com/join/hht2425>



Saint John Baptist de LaSalle...pray for us! Live Jesus in our hearts...forever!