

**Course Materials for
'The Screenwriters' Cinema:
Jhabvala, Hopcraft and Curtis''**

**FA/FILM 4128/5128 3.0
Fall Term, 2006-2007**

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[Outline and Examination (for student use) and the Schedule of Lectures and Screenings [for private use of EWC] for an upper-level one-term course for advanced students of screenwriting on the work and achievement of Ruth Praver Jhabvala, Arthur Hopcraft and Richard Curtis offered during the Fall Term of 2006-2007, typical of the half-term courses taught by the author during the final decade of his teaching.]

Course Outline

**The Screenwriters' Cinema:
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The Screenwriters' Cinema:
Jhabvala, Hopcraft and Curtis

Fall Term, 2006-2007

Evan William Cameron

Course:	FA/FILM 4128/5128 3.0: The Screenwriter's Cinema (Jhabvala, Hopcraft and Curtis)
Term:	Fall, 2006
Pre-requisite/Co-requisite:	Permission of instructor.
Instructor:	Dr. Evan Wm. Cameron
Time & Location of Classes:	Thursdays, 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., Room CFT 108. Class sessions will commence nominally with a lecture addressing central problems of screenwriting exemplified by the film or television programmes screened the previous week(s).
Office Hours:	I shall generally be available in my office in the CFT, Room 216, on Thursdays after class from 1:30 until 2:45 p.m. and at other times by appointment. (It would be prudent to schedule meetings with me before or after class.) I can also be reached by e-mail at ewc@yorku.ca.

Course Description: FA/FILM4128/5128 3.0: the Screenwriters' Cinema (Jhabvala, Hopcraft and Curtis) is designed to enable upper-year students of screenwriting to encounter and assess in a sustained manner the contributions to the craft of screenwriting in historical context of three of the most significant screenwriters of the past quarter-century: Ruth Praver Jhabvala, Arthur Hopcraft and Richard Curtis. We shall concentrate upon the problems that they faced when envisaging the films or television programmes that they were designing, the solutions their work encompassed and the consequences that may now be drawn from them about the nature, scope and limits of what others may now be able to do better because of it, attending in particular to their refinement of a core skill required of anyone hoping to write professionally for film or television, namely the ability to read, assess and *rewrite* works novels into feature-length screenplays or television series of worth.

The lectures will place the work of the three writers within their historical and working context, centring upon the sampling of their work screened in class and the novels from which they were (in almost all instances) adapted, and a portion of the final grade for the course will be determined by a concluding examination upon the screenings, lectures and relevant novels. The larger portion of the grade, however, will be determined by an essay summarising the results of a research project (see below), supplemented by a commentary upon the essay of another student, both of which will require analyzing one or more of the works of the three screenwriters and comparing them structurally with the sources from which they were adapted and/or with other works of comparable kind.

The *objective* of the course is to enable students who are willing to work hard to refine their skills in screenwriting by deepening their understanding of the scope and limits of the achievement of the work of Jhabvala, Hopkins and Curtis.

Screenings and Readings: Students will be expected to register, annotate and ponder the films and television programmes screened in class and whatever other works or comparable kind are necessary to the successful completion of their research projects and supplementary commentaries.

I have also placed on reserve three critical texts written during the late 1920s about the design and structure of novels to which I shall refer during one of the lectures: *The Craft of the Novel* by Percy Lubbock, *The Structure of the Novel* by Edwin Muir and E. M. Forster's *Aspects of the Novel*.

Lastly, a number of novels adapted for the screen by one of our three screenwriters, or otherwise central to one of the possible research projects for the course (see below), have been placed on reserve in Scott Library (almost all are readily available for purchase on-line or in local bookstores): *Rebecca* by Daphne du Maurier; *The Spy Who Came In From The Cold*, *The Looking Glass War*, *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy*, *Smiley's People* and *A Perfect Spy* by John Le Carré; *The Tale of Two Cities* and *Bleak House* by Charles Dickens; *The Europeans*, *The Bostonians* and *The Golden Bowl* by Henry James; *Quartet* and *The Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys; *Mrs. Bridge* and *Mr. Bridge* by Evan Connell; *The Remains of the Day* by Kazuo Ishiguro; *Heat and Dust* (Ruth Praver Jhabvala); *A Room with a View* and *Howard's End* (E. M. Forster); and *Bridget Jones's Diary* by Helen Fielding.

Every student will be expected to have read *at least* five of them, including:

A Room with a View (by E. M. Forster);
Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy (by John Le Carré);
Bridget Jones's Diary (by Helen Fielding);
the novel (or novels) from which the work(s) central to their own research project was adapted;
and lastly,
the novel (or novels) central to the research project upon which they comment of another student.

Assignments, Examinations and their Evaluation:¹

Each student will be required to submit a research paper (of at least 5000 words for undergraduate students, 6500 words for graduate students) and a subsequent commentary upon the research done by another student (2000 words for undergraduate students, 2500 words for graduate students). The former will be worth 50% of the final grade, the latter 30%. A final examination on the lectures, screenings and novels read, worth 20% of the final grade, will conclude the work for the course.²

¹ Last day to withdraw from course without receiving a grade is Friday, 10 November 2006.

² The grading conversion scales that will be used in this course are as follows: to convert a letter grade to a number, A+ = 100, A = 90, B+ = 80, B = 70, C+ = 60, C = 50, D+ = 40, D = 30, F = 0; to convert a number to a letter grade, if the number assigned is >= 95, "A+"; If >= 85, "A"; If >= 75, "B+"; If >= 65, "B"; If >= 55, "C+"; If >=45, "C"; If >=35, "D+"; If >=25, "D"; If <25, "F". Final course grades may be adjusted to conform to Program or Faculty grades distribution profiles.

Research papers for the course must address one of the following fifteen topics:

1. Compare Arthur Hopcraft's adaptation for television of Daphne Du Maurier's *REBECCA* (1997) with that of Philip MacDonald, Michael Hogan, Robert Sherwood and Joan Harrison for film (1940).
2. Compare Hopcraft's adaptation for television of John Le Carré's *THE PERFECT SPY* (1987) with Paul Dehn's adaptation for film of *THE SPY WHO CAME IN FROM THE COLD* (1966), Frank Pierson's adaptation for film of *THE LOOKING GLASS WAR* (1969) or John Le Carré's own adaptation for television (with John Hopkins) of *SMILEY'S PEOPLE* (1982).
3. Compare Hopcraft's adaptation for television of a Charles Dicken's *TALE OF TWO CITIES* with either W. P. Lipscomb and S. N. Berman's adaptation for film (1935), T.E.B. Clarke's adaptation for film (1958) or John Gay's for television (1980).
4. Compare Hopcraft's adaptation for television of Charles Dicken's *BLEAK HOUSE* (1985) with that of Andrew Davies's (2005).
5. Compare Ruth Praver Jhabvala's screenplay for *THE EUROPEANS* (1979) with the novel by Henry James from which it was adapted.
6. Compare Jhabvala's adaptation for film of Jean Rhys's *QUARTETTE* with the adaptation for film by Carole Angier, John Duigan and Jan Sharp of Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1993).
7. Compare Jhabvala's screenplay for *MR. & MRS. BRIDGE* (1990) with the pair of novels by Evan S. Connell, *Mrs. Bridge* and *Mr. Bridge*, from which it was adapted.
8. Compare Jhabvala's screenplay for *THE REMAINS OF THE DAY* (1993) with the novel by Kazuo Ishiguru from which it was adapted.
9. Compare Jhabvala's screenplay for *THE GOLDEN BOWL* (2000) with the novel by Henry James from which it was adapted.
10. Compare Jhabvala's early screenplay for *SHAKESPEARE-WALLAH* (1965) with any of her screenplays written after 1980: how do they differ, why and to what effect?
11. Compare any pair of episodes from the first series of *BLACK ADDER* written by Richard Curtis (with Rowan Atkinson), or any pair from the first series of *THE VICAR OF DIBLEY* written by Curtis alone, with a pair from the latter series credited to Curtis and one of the other writer's: how do they differ, why and to what effect?
12. Compare Curtis's adaptation of *BRIDGET JONES'S DIARY* with the novel by Helen Fielding from which it was adapted.
13. Compare Curtis's screenplay for either *FOUR WEDDINGS AND A FUNERAL* or *NOTTING HILL* with his screenplay for the recent film that he directed called *LOVE ACTUALLY* (2003) that was by common consent less effective. Why so?
14. Compare any two screenplays written by either Hopcraft, Jhabvala or Curtis: how do they differ from each other and from their original novels, why and to what effect?

15. Rework for the better any of the feature-length or series adaptations of Hopcraft, Jhabvala or Curtis, justifying your emendations with respect to the structure and promise of the original novel.

[Note that the verb 'compare' requires you (a) to determine the sequencing and overall structures of the respective screenplays and their sources, and then (b) to explain why the writer(s) may have chosen to present the material in that order, noting the strengths that attend to it. Having done so, you may you then be in a position (c) to suggest possible weaknesses of it, delineate what might better have been done, etc..]

Dates and times of submission of Choice of Topics, Research Papers and Commentaries:

Confirmation of the research topic you have chosen, accompanied by a two-page preliminary account of your reasons for choosing it and the work you have done upon it to date, must be submitted to me *before or at the beginning of class on Thursday, 12 October 2006*.

Your research paper, accompanied by copies of the original sources from which you worked (novels, short stories, plays or screenplays; a DVD of the film; etc.), must be submitted to me *before noon on Monday, 13 November 2006*. During class on Thursday, 16 November 2006, you will be given the research paper of another student, with its accompanying materials, upon which to comment. Your commentary must be submitted to me *on or before the beginning of class on Thursday, 23 November 2006*.

Summary of dates of submission:

Choice of Topic (etc.):	Before or at the beginning of class, Thursday, 12 Oct. 2006
Research Paper:	Before noon on Monday, 13 Nov. 2006
Commentary:	Before or at the beginning of class, Thursday, 23 Nov. 2006

All work submitted must be computer-printed hard-copy in an 11-or-12 point font, double-spaced and with left-edge only justified and with a 1.5 inch margin at the left and 1 inch at the top and bottom of the page. *E-mail submissions will not be accepted*. A cover page should identify you, the course name and number and the assignment being fulfilled. Proof-read all submissions carefully, for errors of spelling and grammar will detract from the grade earned. *Keep a copy of all work submitted for the course* as a hostage against ill fortune, for your work will pass through other hands, sometimes slippery, before being returned to you.

Academic penalties: Students within this course will be expected to complete and submit work as if employed within a professional environment requiring deadlines and recognised standards of honesty and integrity to be respected.

Work submitted late will therefore be penalized **one full letter grade**, and if submitted more than a week late, **will be graded 'F' [or '0']**. Exceptions will be made **only** for reasons of bereavement or medical emergency **with supporting documentation required**.

Work submitted that is determined to be in violation of the Senate and/or Faculty of Fine Arts Policies on Academic Honesty, as prescribed in the Undergraduate Calendar, **will result in a grade for the work, and for the course, of 'F' [or 'O']**.³

Refinements and Changes to this Outline: Refinements to this outline (rectifying errors; further delineations of project requirements, etc.) will be announced in class. Should extraordinary circumstances arise that require substantial changes to it (changes of dates or nature of assignments, etc.), modifications will be made only after consultation with the members of the class and written confirmation of them will be provided.

³ Note: *plagiarism* is a serious offence, damaging to yourself as a person and writer and thus subject to severe academic penalties as indicated in the undergraduate catalogue (website: <http://www.yorku.ca/academicintegrity/students.htm>).

Final Examination

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Final Examination

Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions

Step 1: Ensure that the number in the upper-right corner of this examination matches the one on the cover of your booklet, and that you have entered your name and the date both above and on the cover of your booklet.

Step 2: On the following list of the full-length movies screened in class and the novels (if any) from which they were adapted, **draw a line** through those upon which you concentrated when writing your project or were obliged to consider when preparing your commentary upon the project submitted by another student.

BRIDGET JONES'S DIARY, FOUR WEDDINGS AND A FUNERAL, QUARTETTE, REBECCA, THE
REMAINS OF THE DAY, MR. & MRS. BRIDGE, MRS. BRIDGE; MR. BRIDGE; ROOM WITH A
VIEW, TALE OF TWO CITIES, TINKER, TAILOR, SOLDIER, SPY and NOTTING HILL.

The remaining titles constitute 'your list'. Each of them names a movie or novel or both that you may choose to discuss when answering one – *and only one* – of the three primary questions of the examination. (You must use a different movie and/or novel(s) when answering a subsequent question.)

Step 3: Upon choosing the 'precept' and movie that you will be discussing when answering Question 1 and the movie and/or novel(s) that you will be unpacking when answering Questions 2 and 3,

identify your choices on the cover of your booklet with respect to those questions (for example, '1, FOUR WEDDINGS AND A FUNERAL'; '3, TALE OF TWO CITIES').

Step 4: You have 90 minutes within which to write the examination. When finished, insert this examination into your booklet and return both of them to me.

The Examination

You must answer three questions of equal value, each of them having three parts of equal value, by writing a series of nine short essays (of no more than a couple of paragraphs each) addressing in order the three parts of each of the three questions.

Identify both the question and the part of it being answered in the left margin of your booklet ('(3b)', for example).

Question 1: Select one of the four *precepts* listed below within whose constraints the powerful screenplays of Jhabvala, Hopcraft and Curtis were written. Describe succinctly (a) the nature and importance of the precept and (b) how one of the movies on your list was constructed accordingly, giving examples from it; and then specify (c) the kind of weaknesses that arise when screenwriters disregard it.

(a) *Santayana's Precept:* we see by means of movies events as they were occurring before the camera as the film was exposed.

(b) *The Griffith/Pudovkin Precept:* one ought to avoid events having negligible causal consequences.

(c) *The Dante/Nichols Precept:* film, unlike theatre, is 'a medium of reaction'; hence filmmaking is a 'comedic' art.

(d) *The Bazin/Michelson Precept:* we hear differently from how we see and even more so when perceiving a film; dialogue within screenplays must therefore be written differently than within plays or novels.

Questions 2 and 3 (identical in kind):

Select a novel from your list. Describe and explain (a) how the novel was structured, and why, and (b) how the screenplay adapted from it was structured, and why (that is, in what order do their respective parts appear, and why); and then (c) discuss how and why the structurings differ.

Course Schedule

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Lectures and Screenings

07 Sept.	Lecture 1: Introduction & Overview (Three Writers of Singular Merit who Penetrated the American Market)	THE REMAINS OF THE DAY, 1993, 138m
14 Sept.	Lecture 2: Root 1 of the Two-Fold Distinctiveness of Writing for the Screen (We see things in spaces & times distinct from our own; we hear things within our own space and time; constraints of the screenplay to what we see and hear; the causal & comparative constraints on structure)	BRIDGET JONES'S DIARY, 2001, 97m
21 Sept.	[Screening only.]	REBECCA, 1997, 190m
28 Sept.	Lecture 3: Root 1 continued: REBECCA, chronology, history and causal ordering.	QUARTETTE, 1981, 101m
05 Oct.	[Paper selections due 12 October.] Lecture 4: Root 2 of the ...: the Comedic Art of the Cinema (film as a medium of reaction; sounds as effects of the environment, the prime constraint on adaptation; sounds, identity and character; the consequences of the absence of protagonal identification.	ROOM WITH A VIEW, 1985, 117m
12 Oct.	[Paper selections due.] Lecture 5: Jhabvala's Achievement : novels contra screenplays; Forster's game in ROOM WITH A VIEW ('flat' to 'round' characters); Jhabvala's rejections ('flat' throughout).	MR. & MRS. BRIDGE, 1990, 127m
19 Oct.	[Screening only. Afternoon office meetings.]	TINKER, TAILOR, SOLDIER, SPY, 1979 (1 - 4, 200m)
26 Oct.	[Announce date of examination.] Lecture 6: Hopcraft's Achievement 1: the Evolution of the Writings of John Le Carré to <i>Tinker, Tailor, Soldier Spy</i>	TINKER, TAILOR cont. (5 – 6), 100 minutes; & two interviews with John Le Carré (David Cornwell), 50 minutes.
02 Nov.	[Papers due before noon on Monday, 13 November.] Screening only.]	TALE OF TWO CITIES, 1989, 188m

09 Nov.	Lecture 7: Hopcraft's Achievement 2: Le Carré versus Hopcraft's versions of <i>Tinker, Tailor</i>	BLACK ADDER, 1983, 70m (2 episodes); THE VICAR OF DIBLEY, 1994, 60 (2 episodes)
16 Nov.	[Papers allocated for commentary. Lecture after screening.] Lecture 8: Conclusion of Hopcraft's Achievement 3; summary of the virtues, problems and requirements of writing for series television; Evolution of Curtis's Work 1: From 'Slapstick' to Environmental Humour (introduction to the distinctive problems of episodic television comedy)	FOUR WEDDINGS AND A FUNERAL, 1994, 117m
23 Nov.	[Commentaries due. Lecture after screening. Review of course?] Lecture 9: Evolution of Curtis's Work 2: Integrating Monologues (creating an ensemble environment); then Failure to 'Reason Why'.	NOTTING HILL, 1999, 124m
30 Nov.	[Examination.]	