**HHS 387: Remakes and Adaptations**

**A QUICK SUMMARY:**

* The final project will be a *creative project* in which you contribute to a partial remake of a 20th-century American film and contribute to a few brief essays which contextualize and explain that work.
* Final projects are due by April 28th, but will be accepted without penalty through the last day of class on May 4th.
* Each group will be 3-5 students from HHS 387A. (Groups can span across different discussion sections.) You can create your group on your own and let me know, or you can propose and/or select projects using the Discussion section of the *course lecture* website, or you can do nothing and wait to be assigned to a group. (See “Forming Your Groups” below.)

**OVERVIEW**

This project gives you the chance to explore the history of film through the lens of a remake. Remakes are often maligned, both as a concept in general (with comments such as “Hollywood must be out of ideas”) and in individual cases (as with the notion that remaking, say, *Ghostbusters,* is a personal assault on one’s childhood). But remakes have been around pretty much as long as the cinema itself. The very first Hollywood feature film, *The Squaw Man* (1914), was remade only four years later, and then was remade again in 1931 as a sound film. And there have been plenty of good and even great remakes (such as *The Maltese Falcon*).

For this project, you will be part of a group of 3-5 students working on conceptualizing a remake of a 20th-century film for a modern audience.

*What This Entails*

Your group will select an American film from the 20th century to remake. You will not have to remake the film in its entirety, of course. Rather, I would expect

(a) a remake of 2-3 key scenes (5-10 minutes of film total)

(b) a written essay (3-5 pages) that details the content, historical context, and style of the original film

(c) a brief proposal (2-3 pages) for the remake as a whole. The point of this document is to argue for the value of the remake: why is this particular film worth remaking at this particular time? How would your remake provide a new context or a spin on the story? Would you be doing a fairly faithful adaptation/update? Or would you be importing the general story to a new context (the way, say, *Clueless* resituates the content of Jane Austen into late 20th century teen culture)?

**CONSIDERATIONS ON FILM SELECTION**

You don’t have to pick a *great* film. When selecting what film to use, you should be mindful of your own limitations in terms of time, budget, and so on. Additionally, you’ll want to pick a film that you can say something interesting with. Adapting an 80s romantic comedy, for instance, gives you the opportunity to reflect on how romantic conventions have changed since the time of the original. You should pick your film and craft your remake with an eye towards *making an argument about film and/or history and/or film history.* (And then your “remake proposal” essay should explain in more detail how your film will develop and deliver on that argument.)

**Forming Your Groups**

Groups should consist of 3-5 (in some cases, I might allow a 6th) students from HHS 387-A. Students **DO NOT** have to be in the same discussion group.

There are three ways to find a group for this assignment:

* You can **create your own group** if you already know who you want to work with. In that case, figure out which pair of films your group will work with or what film your group will remake and send an email to the entire group plus me with the names of all the group members and the movies you’ve chosen.
* You can find a group through the “Dicsussions” section of the LECTURE website (<https://sit.instructure.com/courses/58292/discussion_topics>).
  + If you have an idea for a remake that *is not already listed* in the Discussion Thread topics, you can post a discussion thread yourself on the course website with the title(s) of the original and remake. Click the “+Discussion” button at the top of the page to add a discussion topic. You might want to explain a little about the film and why you think it would be good for the project. Your goal here is to *attract collaborators.* If enough people commit, I’ll create a group.
  + If there is a discussion thread for remake that sounds interesting to you, you can sign on to the project by posting in the thread. If enough people commit to the project, then I will send out a group email confirming the members of the group and the titles you will be working on. (If more than five people commit to the project, I may create multiple groups.)
  + Note: if you post in a group and then change your mind or want to switch to a new title, be sure to delete your post before I create the group.
* I hope to have all the groups finalized by the week of April 3rd-7th. At that point anyone that has not found a group through one of the methods above will be assigned a group. (You may be assigned to a group that already has a project in mind or it may be a group that will then have to come up with their own film title to remake.)