HON 373 The Puppet Metaphor Across Media  
Spring 2015

COURSE SYLLABUS

This course investigates the theoretical and historical significance of the myth of the puppet by examining its cultural history and its life across media boundaries. The coursework traces the evolution of influential European, and especially Italian, puppets and puppeteering traditions comparatively with other types of theatre of animation around the world, from Renaissance theatre to avant-garde literature, film, and digital media. This course also addresses the archetype of the transformation from animate to inanimate in literature and cinema, including the theme of the cyborg. Readings and lectures provide historical background and dialogue with recent theories of theatricality, intermediality, and the post-human. Through class discussions, presentations and critical papers, students will analyze a number of literary, cinematographic and digital texts that intersect with puppetry in various ways.
Course Learning Outcomes:
Upon completing this course students will be able to:
• discuss important traits of the historical, cultural, and technical nature of different forms of puppet theatre in Italy and elsewhere,
• discuss and research philosophic, cultural and aesthetic influences of various traditions of puppetry in film, literature, art, and other media.
• discuss and research the modernist conceptions of the human being (especially Pirandello, Bontempelli, De Chirico, and the Italian futurists).
• discuss and research Pinocchio as a fictional character as well as a myth linked to the idea of the cyborg,
• understand and apply concepts such as: theatricality, intermediality, intermedial reference, remediation, and the post-human,
• present and discuss arguments, creative work, and complex issues in writing and public speaking.

Honors Program Learning Outcomes:
Upon completing a course in the University Honors Program students will have:
a. obtained a starting point for integrative exploration of the development of cultures and intellectual achievements through a variety of disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives;
b. sharpened their ability to critically analyze and synthesize a broad range of knowledge through the study of primary texts and through engagement in active learning with fellow students, faculty, and texts (broadly understood);
c. understood how to apply more integrative and interdisciplinary forms of understanding in the advancement of knowledge and in addressing complex challenges shaping the world;
d. developed effective communication skills.

Content
• Psychological theories of the puppet as a phenomenon (social simulation, the animate/inanimate archetype, the trickster)
• Concepts and notions of intermediality
• Puppeteering traditions around the world (forms, repertoires)
• Focus on the case study of Italy (various traditions and their associations)
• Pinocchio (the novel and its adaptations)
• Modernism and puppets (avant-garde literature)
• A brief history of the puppet as special effect (baroque theatre, stop-motion, cartoon, digital animation and blending)
• The cyborg as puppet

Current Required Texts:
Instructional strategies:

- The lessons will build on the student’s own understanding of assigned readings and screenings, and their research of and creative engagement with the subject matter, and present contextual background and interpretative models through interactive and multi-media lectures.

Methods of Evaluation

Participation

A student receives an outstanding participation grade (A) when he or she:

- is on time, brings readings and necessary materials to class,
- avoids distractive use of technology,
- contributes regularly and in an informed manner to the class discussions,
- successfully collaborates with others,
- participates in all class activities,
- manifests professional behavior (also in email exchanges),
- helps others to do all of the above.

* Students can demonstrate their participation also online by commenting to the classmates’ journal blog posts.

* Students are encouraged to purchase a binder portfolio to organize and archive their work and notes, including the following note sections: readings, screenings, in-class work, creative project, research paper. The instructor might ask students to show their portfolio during the semester.

Puppet History Exploratory Reports

The first part of the course will be devoted to developing a firm grasp of the history of the Italian puppet theater. In preparation for each class, students are required to send an email to the professor containing:

- a) an outline of the patterns found in the historical readings (recurring traits among puppetry traditions, repertoires, regional differences, watershed events, etc.)
- b) links to photographs, video or sites that they explored while reading the historical chapter.

The email must be received at least one hour before class. This material might be shared during class to enrich the discussion.

Pinocchio Essay

A number of lessons will be dedicated to an in-depth analysis of Collodi’s original novel *Pinocchio*. During this time, students will be organizing their notes and drafting a 5-6 page thesis-driven analytical essay. An assessment rubric will be provided.

Applied Theory Presentations

As a way to demonstrate acquisition of theoretical frameworks studied, each student will prepare a presentation applying and challenging one of the theoretical models (intermediality, uncanny, neoplatonism, animation, etc.) to a specific text beyond those listed in the syllabus. The presentation lasts a maximum of 10 minutes and it should include an interactive component (interpretative game, open questions, analytic exercises, etc.). Students will need to sign up for one of the available time slots in Part 3 of the syllabus.
Final Project
Students can choose to develop a creative project OR a research paper. In any case, students will develop their project during the entire semester and adhere to specific guidelines.

- **Creative project.** The student hones in and nourishes a point of inspiration that unites his or her own artistic world with the world of the course. The project is organized in various components:
  - **Development:** during the entire arc of the semester, the student matures a creative work of deep intellectual value, be it historical, as in a faithful adaption of specific theatrical traditions and texts, or philosophic as in a meditation on issues addressed during the course. The evolution of the project will be recorded in the blog journal (see entry below).
  - **Reflection paper:** the work will be accompanied by a 6-8 page informal critical reflection on how the project fostered learning and how it was inspired by the coursework (documented with at least 6 quotes from 6 different course readings/screenings per page). To be handed in the date of the presentation.
  - **Final presentation:** the product will be shared with the class at the end of the semester. A copy or recording must be made available for the instructor.

- **Research project.** Students develop an essay which points to an original contribution to the field of cultural studies either by introducing new sources, proposing an innovative method, or presenting an original perspective. The final paper needs to focus on one or more of the texts listed in the syllabus, and engage in dialogue with at least 10 related scholarly sources (such as: scholarly articles, book chapters, books). Format: 12-15 pages, Times 12, double-spaced, MLA style. The project is organized in phases:
  - **Thesis:** Students engage in a conversation with the professor to identify a thesis and to develop it during the entire arc of the semester.
  - **Development:** While the paper is a self-directed assignment, students are required to report on and develop their idea through the blog-journal (see entry below).
  - **Final presentation.** The student leads an interactive lesson based on his/her research project by introducing the topic, preparing conversation questions, assembling lesson materials (handout and images). Heavy text slides must be avoided.

Blog Journal
Students will report on the evolution of the final project and develop their ideas through a journal in blog form. The blog can be published openly or kept private, though access must be given to professor and classmates and the comment feature turned on. Students need to publish one 500-word post per week, starting from week one through the week before final presentations.

Screenings in the library: Students can watch DVDs on reserve directly in the library. There are six media rooms that can be used for this purpose. It is highly recommended that students create a room booking account and reserve a room in advance, as they can fill up quite quickly. This can done here: [http://www1.chapman.edu/library/info/roombooking.html](http://www1.chapman.edu/library/info/roombooking.html)
Grade Breakdown¹
10%: Participation (including comments on classmates’ blogs)
6%: Puppet history exploration emails (2)
10%: Applied theory presentation
14%: Pinocchio essay
60% Final project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Creative Project</th>
<th>Research Project</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10%: blog journal</td>
<td>10%: thesis development</td>
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<tr>
<td>15%: interactive presentation</td>
<td>10%: blog journal</td>
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<tr>
<td>15%: informal critical reflection</td>
<td>15%: interactive presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>20%: final product</td>
<td>25%: paper</td>
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PROGRAM

February 2. Introduction to the course, historical and theoretical framework, objectives and assignments.
Texts: Syllabus.

Part 1: Reality and Myth of the Puppet: The Great Italian Case Study (historical background and exemplifications)

February 4. Historical overview of Italian puppetry
Texts: McCormick, The Italian Puppet Theater (introduction and chapter 1).

February 9. The Italian Glove Puppet Tradition
Texts: McCormick, The Italian Puppet Theater (chapter 2).
Puppet history exploration email #1 due before class

February 11. The Italian Marionettes and Pupi
Puppet history exploration email #2 due before class

February 16. Twentieth Century Puppetry: Puppet Modernism
Texts: McCormick, The Italian Puppet Theater (chapter 8), Edward Gordon Craig, “Note on Masks.”

February 18. The Puppet According to the Avant-Garde
Text: Selection from Massimo Bontempelli’s novel The Last Eve (PDF). Begin reading Pinocchio.

February 23. Pinocchio.
Texts: Carlo Collodi, Pinocchio (ch. 1-15) and N. J. Perella, “An Essay on Pinocchio” (pp. 1-69)

¹ A 100-94; A- 93-90; B+ 89-87; B 86-84; B- 83-80; C+ 79-77; C 76-74; C- 73-70; D+ 69-67; D 66-64; D- 63-60; F 59-0
February 25. Pinocchio.
Texts: Carlo Collodi, *Pinocchio* (ch. 16-23), and C. Klopp, "'Frankenstein' and Pinocchio, Nineteenth-Century Humanoids" (PDF).

March 2. Pinocchio.
Texts: Carlo Collodi, *Pinocchio* (ch. 24-31), and D. Del Principe “Pinocchio and the Gothic” (PDF).

March 4. Pinocchio.
Texts: Carlo Collodi, *Pinocchio* (ch. 32-36), and A. Boylan "Carving a National Identity: Collodi, Pinocchio, and Post-Unification Italy” (PDF).

March 9. “Retellings of Pinocchio” a video-conference with Georgia Panteli
Texts: TBA
Pinocchio Essay due in class

March 11. Puppetry and Early Cinema: Intermediality and Remediation

March 16. Adults Wars in the Dreams of Children: Object/Puppet Animation

March 18. The Puppet and Death: Freud, Zombies, and Pasolini

**Spring Break**

March 30. The Emigrated Pupo: Italian-American Ritualism and Identity

**Part 2: Matters of Essence (midway semester pondering)**

April 1. The Alchemical Puppet

April 6. The Robotic Puppet
April 8. The Virtual Puppet:  

Texts: TBA

April 15. “Italian-style puppetry” a lesson with Dmitri Carter from the Northwest Puppet Center

Texts: Claudia Orenstein, Festive revolutions: the Politics of Popular Theater and the San Francisco Mime Troupe (Selection in PDF).

Part 3: Ancient Puppets on Modern Screens (expanding and testing knowledge)

April 22 *Professor away for conference

April 27. Case study and applied theory presentations.  
Texts: Metropolis (Fritz Lang, 1927 DVD) or Don Juan (Jan Svankmajer, 1969, DVD).

April 29. Case study and applied theory presentations.  
Text: The Years of Living Dangerously (Peter Weir, 1982 DVD)

May 4. Case study and applied theory presentations.  
Texts: Being John Malkovich (Spike Jonze, 1999, DVD). Interview with Philip Huber

May 6. Case study and applied theory presentations.  

Part 4: Sharing and Discussion of Final Projects (harvesting and celebrating work)

May 11. Presentations

May 13. Presentations
Chapman University’s Academic Integrity Policy: “Chapman University is a community of scholars that emphasizes the mutual responsibility of all members to seek knowledge honestly and in good faith. Students are responsible for doing their own work and academic dishonesty of any kind will be subject to sanction by the instructor/administrator and referral to the university Academic Integrity Committee, which may impose additional sanctions including expulsion. Please see the full description of Chapman University’s policy on Academic Integrity at www.chapman.edu/academics/academicintegrity/index.aspx.”

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Chapman University’s Equity and Diversity Policy. “Chapman University is committed to ensuring equality and valuing diversity. Students and professors are reminded to show respect at all times as outlined in Chapman’s Harassment and Discrimination Policy. Please see the full description of this policy at http://www.chapman.edu/faculty-staff/human-resources/eoo.aspx. Any violations of this policy should be discussed with the professor, the dean of students and/or otherwise reported in accordance with this policy.”