

CMST 4141: Analysis and Performance of Narrative
Focus: Milan Kundera's *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*
Department of Communication Studies
Spring 2016
T/TH (Coates 137: HopKins Black Box)

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Office Hours: T and Th 1:30-2:30 or by appointment

Course Description: This course focuses on narrative analysis and performance. Specifically, we will use Milan Kundera's *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* as the text to learn about textual analysis, adaptation, performance composition, performing narrators, solo performance, performing characters, and duo/group performance. The course is a good example of the in-depth research/practice that goes into analyzing, adapting, and performing literature for the stage.

Objectives: By the end of this course, you should:

1. Be able to analyze literature in a more sophisticated way. For example, you will be able to discuss about the role of the narrator in the text after this semester.
2. Be able to adapt literature for the stage.
3. Be able to stage literary adaptations.
4. Increase your ability as a performer.
5. Understand the detailed process of bringing literature from the page to the stage.

Text: Kundera, Milan. *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*. New York: Harper & Row, 1984.

In addition, I will assign a few essays about the novel as our discussion progresses.

Assignments

Discussion Points (30% of class/12 pts. a class)	300 points
Chapter Performance (as narrator)	100 points
Duo Performance Adaptation	100 points
Duo Performance	100 points
"Difficult" Adaptation	100 points
Analysis of Adaptation	100 points
Group Adaptation	100 points
Group Performance	100 points
Total	1,000 points

Grading:

980-1,000	A+
921-979	A
900-920	A-
880-899	B+
821-879	B
800-820	B-
780-799	C+
721-779	C
700-720	C-
680-699	D+
621-679	D
600-620	D-
0-599	F

Description of Assignments:

Discussion Points: After today, we will be in class 25 days. For each day, I will assign a numerical grade that marks your attendance and participation. Each class is worth 12 pts. During class we will either discuss the assigned readings **or** work on performance **or** provide feedback to those who perform. You will receive 8 points **JUST** for being present. But those who contribute to the class in meaningful ways will receive 12 points. Of course, those absent will receive zero points. This is fairly straightforward. Do the reading, be present (in both senses of this word), be a good audience to your classmates, and contribute to your duo/groups.

Chapter Performance: At the beginning of week four, we will get your feet wet with a solo chapter performance selected from Parts One - Four of the novel. This assignment does not require any adaptation. Just choose a chapter, make aesthetic choices about how you would like to stage it, memorize it, rehearse and perform it. We will talk more about this assignment as we approach it.

Duo Performance Adaptation: On February 18th, you will turn in a "duo adaptation" selected from Parts Five - Seven of the novel. The adaptation should be created for two performers and run approximately 4-5 typed pages. Each performer may play multiple roles. We will spend week seven sharing/discussing these.

Duo Performances: On week nine, you will present the duo performances selected by the class.

"Difficult" Adaptation: As we read the novel, I want you to select a scene that you deem would be "difficult" to adapt. Then, begin figuring out creative ways to adapt it. **THE SKY IS THE LIMIT!** These scenes will not be staged, so money and resources are no object. However, the most creative ideas could take shape with little resources. On March 15th, you'll turn in your "difficult" adaptation which not only adapts a section for performance, but describes all of the staging elements needed to move the scene from the page to the stage.

Analysis of Adaptation: After all of this work on adaptation, surprise! I adapted the novel for the HBB in 2003. You will read my adaptation and write a 5-page analysis of it. I will give you

specific details about this paper when I provide you with the adaptation on March 15th. The analysis is due Tuesday, April 5th.

Group Adaptation and Performance: You will spend the last ten days of class working on an adaptation and performance of one part of the novel with a small group. You will be given time and page limits. You may draw from adaptation work you've already produced, but you may not use my adaptation. The final typed adaptation is due Thursday, April 14th, and the performances will take place during the last week of class, and during the final exam period (if needed).

Tentative Course Schedule

Week 1	Jan. 14	Introduction to course
Week 2	Jan. 19 Jan. 21	Discuss Part One & Two Discuss Part Three
Week 3	Jan. 26 Jan. 28	Discuss Part Four Rehearse Solo Chapter Performances
Week 4	Feb. 2 Feb. 4	Solo Chapter Performances Discuss Part Five
Week 5	Feb. 9 Feb. 11	MARDI GRAS (no class) MARDI GRAS (no class: work on duo adaptation)
Week 6	Feb. 16 Feb. 18	Discuss Part Six and Seven *Duo Adaptation Due/Break in groups to share
Week 7	Feb. 23 Feb. 25	Discuss Assigned Essays/Duo Discussions Discuss Assigned Essays/Duo Discussions
Week 8	Mar. 1 Mar. 3	Duo Work Duo Work
Week 9	Mar. 8 Mar. 10	Duo Performances Duo Performances
Week 10	Mar. 15 Mar. 17	*"Difficult Adaptation" Due Discuss
Week 11	Mar. 22 Mar. 24	SPRING BREAK SPRING BREAK
Week 12	Mar. 29 Mar. 31	Begin Group Adaptation Work continue

Week 13	Apr. 5 Apr. 7	*Analysis Due/continue continue
Week 14	Apr. 12 Apr. 14	continue *Group Adaptation Due/continue
Week 15	Apr. 19 Apr. 21	continue continue
Week 16	Apr. 26 Apr. 28	Final Group Performances Final Group Performances

The Americans With Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. If you have a disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please see a coordinator in the Office for Disability Services (112 Johnston Hall) so that such accommodations may be arranged. After you receive your accommodation letter, please meet with me to discuss the provisions as soon as possible.