In this course, we will read three canonical literary texts alongside and against their twentieth and twenty-first-century counterparts, and when we turn to Junot Diaz we will examine how the same character, Yunior, is represented in three books published over a period of sixteen years. For much of the class, our concern will be with how recent writers revise and re-imagine the concerns of writers from earlier periods and other countries. We will also consider the extent to which contemporary authors extend, challenge, or subvert the texts they revise. Sean Meredith’s film features hand-drawn puppets, is full of references to American culture and politics in the last fifty years, and is a satirical update of Dante's *Inferno*. In *The Graveyard Book*, we will see Neil Gaiman offer a ghoulish, graphic-novel inflected rewrite of Kipling. In *The Hours*, Michael Cunningham writes of Virginia Woolf’s life, but also revisits Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway*, shifting the action from London to New York, and focusing not on a victim of shell-shock, nor on the pleasures and travails of an upper-class woman, but instead on the lives of the friends and parents of a gay poet who is suffering from AIDS. Masculinity, and Dominican masculinity in particular, is always a central issue in Diaz’s fiction. Yunoir, while archetypally masculine, is sometimes tortured by his behavior towards women, and our concern will be primarily with how Diaz represents Younio’s masculinity and his changing view of it and the model on which it is based. In each case, we will address the knowledge and expectations of the initial audience for each work, examine the controversies some of these rewrites have engendered, and ponder whether and how the tale or character we read or view second causes us to re-read and re-interpret the tale or character we read first. The historical context in which the work was written and rewritten will thus always be at the heart of our concerns.

**Reading**

Dante, *Inferno*.
Sean Meredith, *Dante’s Inferno* (Film).
Rudyard Kipling, *Jungle Book*.
Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*.
Michael Cunningham, *The Hours*.
Junot Diaz, *This Is How You Lose Her*.
E.Reserve. Two, perhaps three, stories from Junot Diaz, *Drown*.

**The books for the course are available at Boxcar Books, 408 E. 6th Street.**

**Assignments.**

- Three 6 to 8 page essays. The essays should be double-spaced and typed in font size 12. 80% of final grade. Each essay you write must be comparative and it needs to show how the film rewrites the poem, play, or novel that is its source. Pay as much attention to the rewritten work as you do to the source. Quote from the rewritten work as often as you quote from the work on which it draws. The essay must be wide ranging, examining three or more comparable scenes in each work you discuss. The quality of the essay will depend in part on how detailed a reading you are able to provide of both the works you analyze.
- Attendance and participation in discussion and in-class activities. 10% of the final grade.