Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2007 Volume I: Adapting Literature

Blade Runner Redux: Teaching a Sci-Fi Meta-Art Classic

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This curriculum unit provides a guide to teaching Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* and the film adaptation, Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner*. Both texts explore ethical and philosophical ideas related to artificial intelligence. Because the unit is intended for a mixed-level, mixed-grade English class, it could be adapted to a variety of teaching settings. For English teachers unfamiliar with these works, the unit articulates a rationale for teaching by enhancing students' critical thinking, close reading, oral language, and writing skills.

Unlike other adaptation histories, it is the achievement of the film that has inspired a reassessment of the novel. The unit will approach the film as an artistic accomplishment in its own right, rather than as a mere supplement to the novel. Students will explore issues surrounding the idea of adaptation itself, empowering them to consider how and why stories change, and the impact of the medium through which they are conveyed.

Through a variety of activities, students will focus on characterization, theme, and allusions in both the novel and the film. They will also explore *film noir* and the elements of cinema, helping them elaborate upon ideas in the novel. Overall, this unit aims to show students how these two texts work together as one "meta-art" classic.

(Developed for English, grades 9-12; recommended for English, grades 9-12)