

Intro to Film Studies Film Analysis Essay

Due in class **Thursday, December 5** at 4pm

Your assignment is to write a 5-6 page (1,500 word) essay analyzing how cinematic techniques work together to create meaning in a film.

Select a film to analyze. You may analyze any film screened in class (except *Chungking Express*) or another film of your own choosing. If you select a film we have not watched in class, please get approval from your TA first. The film you choose must be readily available for repeated close viewing on DVD or online streaming. If you choose to analyze a film from the class, your analysis must go *significantly beyond* what has already been discussed in lecture and section. Search for films available in the Media Center here: <http://cruzcat.ucsc.edu/search~S1>

Watch your film and take notes. Pay attention to the broad themes explored in the film, its overall structure, and significant techniques used. The section "Preparing to Write about a Film" in Corrigan and White's chapter 12 will be very helpful to you here.

Ask yourself questions. Review the discussion questions that have typically been asked in lecture and section, as well as those included on the prompt for the sequence analysis essay. Ask yourself these same questions about the film you have selected. For instance: Does a particular color or lighting scheme dominate? If so, why? Is the narrative chronological or achronological? What effect does this arrangement have? Does the film engage with genre conventions? How and for what purpose? With whom do we identify? What effect does this have? What role, if any, do women or people of color play in the narrative? How are they shot and lit?

Begin to formulate an argument. The key to your essay will be developing an original, specific thesis statement about how 1 or 2 particular techniques underscore one key theme in the film. Answering one or two of the questions you pose yourself will help you formulate a thesis. Review "Elements of a Film Essay" in Corrigan and White's chapter 12.

- *Ineffective thesis statement:* In this essay I will analyze the use of sound in *Blackmail*'s "knife" sequence, connecting it to larger thematic and visual patterns in the film as a whole.
- *Effective thesis statement:* In *Blackmail* off-screen sound illustrates Alice's powerlessness, while also encouraging viewers to identify with this position of victimization.

Draft thesis statements must be emailed to your TA by 4pm on **Monday, December 2**.

Select examples to include in your essay. Your paper must include close cinematic analysis of the type you did in your sequence analysis essay. Plan on analyzing one or two brief sequences from your chosen film in detail. Avoid description and plot summary; focus on cinematic analysis instead.

No outside research is required! We are interested in *your own ideas and analysis*.

Essay Requirements:

- Type and double-space your paper.
- Number the pages.
- Underline or *italicize* film titles. (CAPS or "quotation marks" are incorrect.)
- Put your name, your TA's name, and section time at the top of the first page.
- Spell check and proof read your paper.
- All essays must be submitted in hard copy; electronic submissions are not permitted.

Lateness Policy: Extensions can only be granted in exceptional circumstances and only with *prior permission from your TA*. Essays submitted late without an extension will be accepted only at the discretion of your TA; if accepted, they will be subject to *a penalty of one grade step per day* (ie, a B paper would become a B- if submitted one day late, a C+ if submitted two days late, a C if submitted three days late, etc.).

Academic Misconduct: Any act of academic misconduct, including but not limited to cheating, fabrication, plagiarism or facilitating academic dishonesty, will result in **failure of the class** and will be reported to your College Provost. UCSC's Academic Integrity Policy: http://www.ucsc.edu/academics/academic_integrity/undergraduate_students/

Drop-in Writing Tutoring
ARCenter, room 216
Monday – Thursday, 3 – 6pm
Call to book an appointment | 831.459.4333