

FILM 101

What is the value of analyzing film as part of an academic discipline?



Academic writing about film requires that you see beyond your enjoyment of the film experience and consider the “invisible things,” such as camera angles, composition and editing, lighting, sound and mise-en-scene (sets, costumes, makeup).
These are the “**film elements**” that are distinctive to this art form.

Source: University of Calgary Writing Support Services, October, 2014.

When we are caught up in the excitement or emotion of the film's story, we often become **passive viewers**, swept along in the entertainment. Of course, these responses are important, but they are just a beginning point when it comes to writing thoughtfully about film.



Source: University of Calgary Writing Support Services, October, 2014.

Film review vs. Film analysis

What's the difference?

Film Review:

A film review: tends to focus on the **surface story**, providing a lengthy description of the plot.

A review typically makes recommendations about whether the film is worth watching, so it is highly subjective and rather simplistic.

It does not meet the standards of academic writing.

Source: University of Calgary Writing Support Services, October, 2014.

Film Analysis:

A critical analysis of a film involves research, critical thinking and analysis.

It avoids a **lengthy reprise** of the plot except where it is necessary to remind the reader of important themes or elements.

The film essay supports a clearly articulated argument (your thesis) by looking closely at some feature/s of the film.

An analysis means that you must engage on a level beyond that of storytelling.





An analysis is not a presentation of your personal feelings or impressions.

Although it **DOES** ask you to take a stand on a particular question or issue

An argumentative essay for FILM 101 involves using your **analytical** and **interpretative** skills to develop and argue your position based on your thesis.



From Assignment 1:

Write a 2-page analysis of the film you chose from the list provided on the first day of classes....

Your analysis must include an "argumentative thesis statement" with scholarly evidence to support your position.

As a starting point for your film analysis:

- Watch the film and watch it again.
- Take notes.
- Critically engage with the film/s.
- Focus on thematic concepts related to the film/s.

Then...

Think about what you want to
prove in your film analysis

From there: formulate your
thesis statement.

What is a thesis statement?

- Before you write your essay you should be able to state in a single short sentence exactly what you want to prove.
- This statement of what your paper is about is your **THESIS** statement.

Example of a thesis statement:

The lighting and colour palette in the film 'Edward Scissorhands' is used to show the isolation of the main character from the community in which he is living.

What 'film elements' are being mentioned?

What is this essay going to prove?



Breaking down the thesis statement

The lighting and colour palette in the film 'Edward Scissorhands' is used to show the isolation of the main character from the community in which he is living.

KEY WORDS:

- Lighting
- Colour palette
- Isolation
- Main character
- Community

Example of a thesis statement:

In the film 'Moonlight' the segmentation of the main character's life into three parts is used to show how the character and his life develop over time.

What 'film element/s' are being mentioned?

What is this essay going to prove?



Breaking down the thesis statement

In the film 'Moonlight' the segmentation of the main character's life into three parts is used to show how the character and his life develop over time.

KEY WORDS:

- Segmentation / three parts
- Main character's life
- Character and his life develop

REMEMBER: writing a film analysis means that there must be a specific point that you are trying to convince the reader to accept

- i.e.: *you must argue in support of your position*


Film analysis: Getting Started

1. Break it down. What is this assignment asking you to do?
2. Research your topic
3. State your position in a thesis statement

Film analysis: Getting Started

4. Organize your thoughts into an outline
5. Begin writing your essay
6. Review your essay for grammar, spelling and rationality prior to submitting it

Argumentative essay structure

Introduction:	<p>Introduce your essay (Hook: make it interesting).</p> <p>Background: What happened? When? Why did it happen? Who was involved? Where?</p> <p>Thesis statement: What is your essay going to look at? What is your argument? (Take a position)</p>
Body Paragraph:	Supporting point/s in line with your thesis statement.
Body Paragraph:	Supporting point/s in line with your thesis statement.
Body Paragraph:	Supporting point/s in line with your thesis statement.
	Can have more supporting paragraphs 
Rebuttal Paragraph:	Acknowledging a different / opposing view (Include a refutation)
Conclusion:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Re-state thesis statement (use different words)- Summarize the information from your body paragraphs- Make a statement based on your ideas (without using personal language such as: I, you, we, us, our). Make sure this agrees with your thesis statement.



Questions?