

FILM 1F94 – Introduction to Film Studies

Term One Essay Assignment: Close Analysis of a Film Sequence

Worth: 15% of Final Grade

Length: approximately 1500 words (roughly 5-6 double spaced pages)

DUE: At the beginning of Lecture, Tuesday November 8.

***Please read this information sheet carefully, as there are a number of important details specific to the submission of your essay.

You are required to submit this assignment **twice**. The electronic file of your essay needs to be submitted online, through the turnitin function, accessible through the course SAKAI site, under “Assignments.” You are also required to bring a hardcopy of your essay, and submit it in person to your teaching assistant. (This will be done at the beginning of the lecture on November 8. You will also be required to sign a sheet when you submit your essay.)

Please see the note regarding the use of turnitin found in the course syllabus.

A signed copy of the CPCF Pledge of Academic Integrity must be attached to the hardcopy of your essay. This form will be available as a PDF through SAKAI.

For issues relating to essay writing style, please follow the guidelines found in the Department of Communication, Popular Culture and Film Style Guide:

<https://brocku.ca/social-sciences/departments-and-centres/cpcf/student-success/essay-style-guidelines>

You should include a title page, which should provide your name, your student number, the course code and **the name of your Teaching Assistant**.

For this assignment, chose **one** of the two following sequences, and compose a critical analysis that addresses the question posed below. Both sequences can be viewed under RESOURCES / TERM ONE ESSAY CLIPS in the course SAKAI site.

Scene #1: Conclusion of *Rear Window* (15 min.)

Scene #2: Conclusion of *Memento* (16 min.)

Question:

How do aspects of the film’s stylistic system, or its “cinematic language,” in this sequence work to address, advance and (possibly) resolve the core themes and narrative conflicts in this film? What filmmaking techniques are employed to address the film’s wider themes and concerns? Possible cinematic elements to discuss include (but are not limited to): mise-en-scene; cinematography, editing, sound, performance, as well as elements of plot and story.

IMPORTANT NOTES

You must develop a clear thesis in your essay. A good thesis statement should indicate your “argument” – your “take” on the question posed. Your analysis should then work to support this argument. Example of a thesis statement: “Through a heavily distorted mise-en-scene, *The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari* reveals the subconscious of German society dealing with the trauma and aftershocks of World War I.”

You will need to develop an argument that expresses the particular interpretation about the sequence that you are examining. The body of your essay will then be composed of different subsections that analyze the particular elements of the sequence, in support of your original argument.

The aim of this assignment is **close analysis** of the particular sequence. You should not merely provide a plot synopsis of the events of the film. Do not simply describe the scene and its various elements. Instead, you should be offering an interpretation of the sequence and the meaning that you believe is conveyed throughout it. Essays that only provide a description, or plot summary, and that lack adequate organization, run the risk of receiving a failing grade.

Be sure to consider the theme(s) of the film you chose. The theme is not simply what the film is obviously about, but rather the manner in which the film treats and shapes its content. (*Rear Window*, for instance, is about a murder mystery, but its various themes can be understood as issues related to voyeurism and marriage.)

This is not a research assignment. You are not expected to seek out additional research in support of your essay. The goal is to provide your own original analysis, insights and arguments. That being said, if you do for some reason make reference to other texts, including the course textbook, you should offer proper citations as outlined in the style guide. However, you are not being evaluated on your ability to incorporate additional research into your essay. The focus is meant to be on your ability to observe and articulate original insights about the film sequence.

Try to incorporate the correct terminology and vocabulary specific to the study of film. Your ability to incorporate the correct and relevant concepts from the course is a key part of the grade for this assignment. You **do not** need to provide citations if you use terms explained in lecture or in the course texts. These are common terms. You should only provide citations if you repeat substantial aspects of the textbook’s use of the term, or its application of ideas. Any **direct** (word-for-word) citation from any source needs to be cited.