

ENGL 2132

Prof. Bishop

Fall 2009

Research Paper

Due Date: 6 May 2010 (no late papers will be accepted!)

Objective: Students will synthesize the concepts covered thus far (including but not limited to: Romanticism, Realism, Naturalism, Modernism, the Harlem Renaissance, and Postmodernism) by writing a researched essay on a contemporary American film that contextualizes that film in American literature and culture, while—ideally—connecting the film to at least one other text to demonstrate the film’s significance to our culture.

Guidelines: For this assignment, students will choose (and independently screen) films from the list provided by the professor. After analyzing the films and connecting those films to at least one other (but no more than three other) text(s) from the course, students will write researched arguments about the role of those films in American culture.

- The essay will be between 4-8 pages, formatted according to MLA guidelines.
- The essay will have a clear thesis that asserts a clear argument about the film and its relationship to culture in some way. Essays that do not do feature a thesis will not pass.
- The essay will feature at least three secondary sources and two primary sources. Of the three secondary sources, only one may be a website. The other two must be either books or journal articles accessed through GALILEO, or a combination thereof.
- The essay will address the following questions (this should be done indirectly, without asking rhetorical questions):
  - What makes this film and the other texts “American”? (Do not say “written/directed by an American”)
  - What connections exist between the film and the texts? Why are those connections important to our culture?
  - What period(s) might this film/text represent? How are the period’s main notions demonstrated in the film/text? Why is this important?
  - What can this film/text teach us about being American? Does the film build off of established American tropes or patterns? Does the film portray America in a certain light? Does the film critique a particular notion of American-ness? Does the film wish to push a particular ideology? Why?
- The essay will be graded according to the course rubric, with strict adherence to MLA guidelines. Up to 10 points may be deducted for failure to adhere to MLA guidelines for formatting or citations.
- All work—primary and secondary sources—must be properly cited in-text and in the bibliography.