

Film Clip Analysis

"the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is to hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature." —"Hamlet"

Our goal will be to use film adaptations as a way of provoking our own creative and imaginative responses to the play texts. Critical thinking and collaboration are the elements most stressed in this assignment.

From the list of films on reserve, each group will select a film adaptation. Then, each person in the group should write a 2-page essay focusing on one of the following aspects of film technique: Casting, Settings and Décor, Costumes, Sound, Composition and Design of the Frame, Color, Lighting, Shots and Angles, and Editing of the Play Text. Your analysis should focus on a single film clip (3-5 minutes in duration).

The group will also produce a 2-page essay summarizing the results of the individual essays, creating an overall judgment about the success of the adaptation.

Therefore, each group portfolio will consist of individual essays from each member of the group as well as a group essay summarizing the results.

The following grading guide defines, for the purposes of this class, the required elements of critical thinking that must be present in each essay, as well as the points awarded to each aspect:

- a focused thesis that critically assesses the success of the film-clip you have selected from your group's adaptation. It should be clear how you rate the film-clip as an adaptation of Shakespeare's play text. The thesis should not be a reductive yes or no but rather a provocative claim that does justice to the complexity of the film and the play text. You need to be specific about why and how it is successful, not successful, or partially successful. The summarizing group essay should also have a similar thesis that takes into account the results of the individual essays (20 points)
- original insights into how the film adaptation negotiates the play text (20 points)
- persuasive arguments (20 points)
- specific and appropriate visual and textual evidence (20 points)
- appropriate organization, grammar, and spelling (20 points)

Here are the directions and criteria for the essay/group editing:

1. From the reserve list, select a film adaptation of the one of the plays we are reading, before or after the midterm, depending on when your group is scheduled to do its dramatic presentation. The adaptation must be one that uses Shakespeare's play text for a majority of the film script.
2. Sometime during the drafting process your group should schedule a conference with me to go over any questions and to consult with me about your drafts.
3. After each member has drafted an essay independently, the group will meet and/or communicate via email to peer edit each other's papers. (I will be providing peer editing sheets with directions to guide the activity.)
4. After revising your drafts independently, the group will write the final summarizing essay and submit the portfolio to me, along with your completed peer editing sheets.

Your grade will be based on the results of your individual essay, on the quality of your contribution to peer editing, and on the quality of the final summarizing essay. Individual Essay 50%; Peer Editing 25%; Summarizing Essay 25%.

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