

Homework due tomorrow: Take time and ponder the assignment and the movies you will use, and come up with a question (or if you can go further and can come up with a theme/thesis/ statement) and [submit here before class begins Tuesday, 12/6](#). AND if your two primary movies are not named in the question, list them after your thesis.

Continue reading below... (you'll find that this assignment is reiterated in the section labeled **Next Steps**)

In other words... More specifics, clarifications, requirements... And how to begin...

The Independent Study for IB Film is: A documentary script exploring an aspect of film theory or film history, based on the study of films from more than one country.

Requirements for the Independent Study:

1) The script must clearly indicate the relationship between the audio and visual elements of the documentary, using the A/V format.

2) Scripts must be 8–10 pages long and must use 12-point Courier font and single spacing.

Notes: a. use cinematic rather than literary terms

b. audience of film students ages 14 to 18

c. primary voice of the documentary must clearly be you

d. must make reference to a minimum of two main films and films must originate from more than one country

e. *at SL the study is not necessarily comparative*

3) Six (6) required sources – at least two must be actual book sources and two must be from Academic journals or scholarly publications (start with: [Academic OneFile](#) & [JSTOR](#))

- why you ask? because books look better and film professionals talking about film are the experts

- if you are testing for IB Film, all sources will need annotations (specifics later)

- you will also include citations for the movies you include in your discussion, but these do not count as your 6

4) Must reference at one historical film period/movement (like: Soviet Montage, French New Wave...)

5) Must have a theme/thesis (“...a documentary film supports an underlying argument, assertion, or claim”)

- this will guide your documentary and will drive the evidence you find and include (evidence from research and evidence from textual analysis)

- while not required, making a comparative statement would be most logical

6) Must include some discussion of filmmaking in the country of origin (for your two major films) related to your topic

Should Include:

7) Interviews

- by those relevant to your topic that worked on the films – director, cinematographer, etc. (most films you’ll chose are recent, you should be able to find actual interviews or transcripts of interviews – or look at DVD commentary)

- by critics/film theorists (NOT reviewers) regarding either your particular films or the theory you have chosen

Formatting Notes:

8) A/V Format... All descriptions of video and audio elements must be both detailed and specific.

a. In the Audio column:

- The shooting script includes the exact dialogue and sound you will hear at each precise moment of production.

- There should be a variety of different audio sources.

b. In the Video column

- a breakdown of all camera placements and movements

- must include shot descriptions

- use a variety of framing points: ECU- extreme close up/ CU- close up / MCU- medium close up / LS- long shot or FS- full shot/ ELS- extreme long shot/ OTS- over the shoulder/etc

- interviews are generally shot with a MCU and have a background that matches the content of the interview

- every shot/footage included must be motivated by the content in the script, audience wants to see examples of what you are talking about

How to begin:

A. Choose a Focus Begin with one non-American movie that you know or want to know better, considering that, decide which of these you should address (and see **B.** below):

1) Formalist Theory

Attempts to explain how filmmakers' techniques/style create the movie's layered meanings, looking at how the ingredients of a film affect the outcome. A theory of film study that is focused on the formal, or technical, elements of a film: i.e., the style of the lighting, scoring, sound and set design, shot composition, editing, etc.

Ask yourself: Is this what I should address, and if so, should I just choose one element (like editing)? Or a few (mise en scene, sound, and editing)? Think: The purpose and effect of __ in film.

2) Genre Theory

Concerned with identifying and analyzing the characteristics of particular genres - looks at a film as a representative of a genre, comparing it with other films from the same genre and finding meaning by identifying shared motifs and/or variations from the expected formula (do they follow/not follow genre conventions)

Ask yourself: Is this what I can thoroughly research for my Independent Study considering the movie I watched and the others I will reference?

3) Should I choose another film theory based on the movie I chose (I will research the theory on my own)?

4) Film History

Choosing a particular period (or periods – though an assessment of film during a relatively similar period of time is most logical) in film history and discussing (comparing) your two main films using your knowledge of film elements, using film language.

Ask yourself: Is this what I can thoroughly research for my Independent Study considering the movie I watched and the others I will reference? Does my chosen foreign film fit into a particular film making movement (or refer to one)? What elements of film making should I focus on (editing, country of origin, narrative, etc...).

Next steps:

B) Choose two main movies one a non-American film – the other should be a movie you are familiar with that smoothly fits in to your chosen focus (think about a movie that you are reminded of when watching the non-American film... because it is a similar story, because it has a similar 'look', because a particular character reminds you of another... etc.)
- AND at least two minor movies

C) Write a question that will lead you to ponder your films and seek evidence that will give you an answer (ie: lead to a main theme/thesis/statement). Film theory/historical period should be clearly stated in your question.

D) Due before class begins tomorrow, Tuesday, 12/6, [submit your question](#) (or if you already have a theme/thesis/statement – submit that). AND if your two primary movies are not named in the question, list them after your thesis.

If it helps, see next page for a few ideas...

To get you thinking...

- note: remember all would be addressing two main movies (and additional minor movies to support your ideas) from at least two different countries
- note: these are vague, you must be more specific

Cinematography in films with very different budgets

Independent Films from various countries

Feminist Theory: representation of women from films from different countries (be more specific: the mother role, the grandmother role, the femme fatal, etc.)

Formalist Theory, Cinematography: rural vs urban settings in films from different countries

Formalist Theory, Editing: editing in particular genres from films from different countries

Formalist Theory, Sound: the use of silence, ambient sound, the score, etc. in movies from different countries

Genre Theory: two clearly defined movies of the same genre from two+ countries (how they differ/adhere to genre rules)

Lighting and composition in sports films/action films

Mise en Scene in comedy (which elements?)

Sound: the use of voice-over narration in films from different countries

Use of lighting and camera angles on female vs male characters

Use of lighting to expose morality of characters

The role of a soundtrack in an action (or Western, romantic comedy, etc.) film.

Realist theory: differences between animated and live-action creation of reality.

From the Subject Report:

The best independent studies were those that explored three to four sub-points in examining and expanding on a topic. An example would be a topic on gender representation of the femme fatale in noir films which then analysed the use of lighting, framing and angles and the cinematic depiction of the "fate" of these characters. When this is done across a number of films, there is more than enough depth and scope for a reasonable independent study. It also provides variation and complexity to the argument which will help the candidate to score well in the "scope and depth" aspects of the markbands.