

Reviews do more than give a film a thumbs-up or -down. They are informal secondary sources that provide evidence and details, carefully selected not to spoil the film, that justify whether it is worth your hard-earned cash. But how do you define a film's value? Do we all go to the movies for the same reasons? Reviews, by the evidence they select and the claims they make based on that evidence argue implicitly – and sometimes explicitly – for the social value of a film. In this assignment, you will *compare and contrast three (3) separate reviews of the same film*, assess their arguments regarding for whom this is worth viewing, or not, and what the potential gains would be for doing so or not.

Step One: Review Collection

Start collecting newspaper reviews, as many interesting ones as you can find, and post them to your Omeka website. Each should be from a different newspaper. (Blogs have different audiences and conventions, which we will address in the next assignment; do not use them for this task.) Here are some places to get started:

- *The Chicago Sun-Times* (Roger Ebert): <http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews>
- *The New York Times* (A.O. Scott): <http://www.nytimes.com>
- *The New Yorker Magazine* (David Denby): <http://www.newyorker.com>
- *Los Angeles Times* (Kenneth Turan): <http://www.latimes.com>

Step Two: Analyzing Axiology¹

Select the three most compelling reviews for your essay. This is a very short paper, so organization will be key to thoroughly executing the task with clarity – a potential outline:

- a) *Introduction* (1¶): Establish your sources by first noting the necessities of the film being reviewed and the context of its release. What reviews did you select? From which publications? Did they run in print or only online? How close were the review publication dates to the wide release of the documentary? Include a thesis statement that makes an arguable claim about a major trend between the three reviews, or an issue on which all three fundamentally disagree.
- b) *Analysis* (3¶): Spend a paragraph analyzing each review and identify its argument. What kinds of evidence does the reviewer use? To what effect? Are you convinced? Why or why not?
- c) *Counterclaims* (1¶): Reflect on your three analyses. Were there any surprises? Did the group collectively ignore or devalue the same elements you thought would be important? What did they pay more attention to than you expected?
- d) *Conclusion* (1¶): Synthesize your three analyses looking for trends and common threads. Was there a particular a scene or element in the film they all touched on? In general, what were their justifications to see or skip the film? What about it is of worth? Did the financial payout (<http://www.boxofficemojo.com>) at the box office match up with their social value?

Deadlines

- By **September 4** select a documentary from the list provided and give it a first watch.
- By **September 13** post all of the useful reviews you've found to your [Omeka](#) website as "items." (Make sure to include the MLA bibliographic citation somewhere in the item entry.) Then create a "Collection" grouping together the reviews you found most helpful. (*Over*)

¹ Axiology (noun): the theory of value.

Omeka Exhibit: Reviews Essay

- ✦ By **September 13** submit your essay (2-3 pages) to [Compass](#) as well as bring a hard copy to submit in class. Make sure to include a Works Cited page following the MLA format (p. 561 in *The Film Experience*) and guidelines in the syllabus.

Omeka Tips & Tricks

- Check out the how-to guide: <http://tinyurl.com/d22m3do>
- See the sample website: <http://tavaresengl104.omeka.net>

Student Name: [Sample Rubric]

Final Grade:

Criteria	Superior	Satisfactory	Adequate	Unsatisfactory	Unacceptable
1) A central and specific <i>arguable claim</i> , which is clearly articulated in the introduction, and sustained throughout the paper.					
2) Addresses all <i>assignment</i> components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses three (3) reviews. • All are separate newspaper sources. • Corresponding online posts have been made to <i>Omeka</i>. 					
3) Sustains thoughtful <i>analysis</i> and effectively employs <i>evidence</i> .					
4) At the sentence level as well as a whole, the essay is clearly <i>organized</i> and follows a logical progression.					
5) <i>Format, mechanics, and proofreading</i> meet course standards, including a Works Cited.					

Comments: