

APPENDIX 1: ORIGINAL ASSIGNMENT

This was the assignment taught Fall '17, as it appeared in the syllabus:

MOVIE CRITICAL REFLECTIONS

Students will critically respond to three movies over the course of the semester, out of a possible six opportunities. The objective of the assignment is to examine each movie at the level of its argument, and to engage that argument in creative ways. Movies, like all texts, contain arguments. Directors make decisions about what topics are discussed, who gets interviewed, what issues are foregrounded, what language is used, as well as develops lighting, music, visuals, and sound to elicit specific reactions. A critical reflection provides the opportunity to engage (rather than passively consume) the material, placing you in a position to say something unique about its content.

Students should feel free to write critical reflections for more than three movies. If so, the highest three grades will be used to calculate the final grade.

Overview:

Each critical reflection assignment should be 2-3 double-spaced pages (12pt font, 1" margins). I would recommend taking notes while watching each movie, and returning to different scenes during the writing process to ensure you are accurately capturing the material in a detailed way. Although not required, drawing upon course readings will often facilitate higher quality answers.

While you are welcome to organize your reflections however you wish, one possible outline would be:

1. A short opening paragraph that clearly states *your* argument.
2. A *first body paragraph* giving a concise yet detailed overview of the movie.
3. A *second body paragraph* referencing specific examples, scenes, and quotations that demonstrate what the director's main "argument" is. This paragraph should not simply summarize plot points, but rather give specific evidence from the movie as to what the director is trying to convey. External readings might be useful in informing this analysis.
4. A *third body paragraph* providing some thoughts about whether you found the director's argument compelling, what decisions might be made differently and why, etc.

APPENDIX 2: REVISED ASSIGNMENT

This was the assignment taught Spring '18, as it appeared on the assignment handout:

Understanding Conflict in Africa
Spring 2018
Isaac Kamola

Critical Movie Analysis

Objectives:

Students will critically respond to three movies over the course of the semester, out of a possible six opportunities. The objective of the assignment is to examine each movie at the level of its argument, and to engage that argument in creative ways that build upon the themes of the course.

Movies, like all texts, contain arguments. Directors make decisions about what topics are discussed, who gets interviewed, what issues are foregrounded, what language is used, as well as develops lighting, music, visuals, and sound to elicit specific reactions. A critical reflection provides the opportunity to engage (rather than passively consume) the material, placing you in a position to say something unique about its content.

Overview:

Each critical analysis should be three double-spaced pages (12pt font, 1" margins). I would recommend taking notes while watching each movie, and returning to different scenes during the writing process to ensure you are accurately capturing the material in a detailed way.

The paper should take time to carefully explain key scenes from the movie, including using direct quotes as necessary. You should also place the movie into conversation with at least one text from the course. Select a text that can "open" the movie to new interpretations, help explain some aspect of the movie in greater detail, and/or provide a new critical perspective on the book.

Formatting:

Each paper should include:

1. a title
2. an introduction (which lays out a clear argument)
3. supporting paragraphs that build upon each other
4. a "works cited" at the bottom of the last page.

Please see the course Moodle page for information on how to cite movies, online movies, books, book chapters, and journal articles.

Grading:

Please consult the "Assignment Grades" rubric in the syllabus (p.5) for a detailed overview of writing expectations. Students should feel free to write critical reflections for more than three movies. If so, the highest three grades will be used to calculate the final grade.