

21L.011 The Film Experience, Fall 2013
Prof. David Thorburn

Writing Guidelines for Papers

A Note About Plagiarism

Plagiarism -- use of another's intellectual work without acknowledgement -- is a serious offense. It is the policy of the Literature Faculty that students who plagiarize will receive an F in the subject, and that the instructor will forward the case to the Committee on Discipline. Full acknowledgement for all information obtained from sources outside the classroom must be clearly stated in all written work. All ideas, arguments, and direct phrasings taken from someone else's work must be identified and properly footnoted. Quotations from other sources must be clearly marked as distinct from the student's own work.

If you borrow another person's phrasing, that material must be enclosed in quotation marks. If you use ideas conceived by others but reformulate them in your own prose, then you must acknowledge your collaboration in one of two ways: explicit acknowledgment in the body of your text ("As Lionel Trilling argues in his introduction to *Pride and Prejudice*, . . .") or in a footnote fully citing your source.

For further guidance on the proper forms of attribution, consult the MIT Writing and Communication Center's [Avoiding Plagiarism page](#).

Citations and Footnotes

There are many accepted formats for citations and footnotes. I prefer the following simple principles.

1) Italicize (or underline) titles of books, plays or feature films; use quotation marks to indicate titles of poems, stories or articles. Novellas or long stories that have been published in individual bindings are italicized as if they were full-length texts. So: Conrad's short story "Youth" is placed in quotation marks as is Yeats' poem "The Second Coming," but *Heart of Darkness* (a novella), *Lord Jim* (a novel) and *Modern Times* (a feature film) are italicized.

2) Use parenthetical citations instead of footnotes wherever possible. For instance, in citing quoted passages from the primary text under discussion, the first reference should include full title, place and date of publication, and a page citation; thereafter, only the page citation is necessary. Eg: (*Heart of Darkness*, London, 1898, p. 6). *In the next citation:* (p. 8). Note that the period concluding the sentence goes outside the parenthesis citing the page number(s).

3) An alternative to this practice: the *first reference* to the text can be footnoted, which note can include the remark "Subsequent parenthetical references are to this edition."

(4) For **feature films**, the first citation should **give the last name of the director and the year of the film's making or initial release--either date is fine, so long as you are consistent**. Thus: "This essay concerns the ideological implications of *Battleship Potemkin* (Eisenstein, 1925—henceforth *Potemkin*)." Or: " ... Eisenstein's 1925 masterpiece, *Battleship Potemkin*." If you are using a special video or DVD version of the film, it is helpful to add this to the citation in the text or in a footnote; list the company of ownership and the catalogue number: "*High Noon* (Zinnemann, 1952; DVD version, Artisan #53496).

5) If you cite secondary works in footnotes, use the following format: David Thorburn, *Conrad's Romanticism* (New Haven, 1974), p. 17. Note that publisher is *not* required.

6) MOST IMPORTANT: Do not repeat information unnecessarily. For example, if your text reads "As David Thorburn suggests,", then the footnote should not repeat the author's name; if you also mention the book title in your text, then the footnote should include only the place and date of publication and the page number.

Formatting Quotations

When quoting material, integrate the quoted passage into the body of your own text using quotation marks if the passage is not longer than four lines. If the passage is longer than four lines, indent an extra five spaces left and right, forgo the quotation marks, and use single spacing.

Use an **ellipsis** (three spaced dots) to indicate omitted material. If the omission begins after a complete sentence, retain the original period and *then introduce the ellipsis*.

Use **square brackets** [] to indicate your additions or changes in the original material.

Example 1: A quoted passage integrated into your text:

The Shadow Line repeatedly dramatizes scenes of tense conversation and even verbal coercion between the young protagonist and a series of older figures. As David Thorburn writes, "Though all his people are orphans, Conrad remains one of the great portrayers of the anguished impotence of fatherhood. One of his defining subjects is maturity's useless generosity toward the young."¹

Example 2: Extended quotation, separated by indentation from your text:

André Bazin, in his essay "The Myth of Total Cinema," argues that a silent cinema was never what the inventors of the film medium had in mind:

The guiding myth, then, inspiring the invention of cinema, is the accomplishment of that which dominated in a more or less vague fashion all the techniques of the mechanical reproduction of reality in the nineteenth century, from photography to the phonograph, namely an integral realism, a recreation of the world in its own image It is understandable from this point of view that it would be absurd to take the silent film as a stage of primal perfection which has gradually been forsaken by the realism of sound and color. The primacy of the image is both historically and technically accidental.²

¹ *Conrad's Romanticism* (New Haven, 1974), p. 45.

² *What Is Cinema?* (Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1967), p. 21. Essay first published in French in 1946. English translation by Hugh Gray.

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