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College Writing I
Spring 2021

Essay Two
"Should I?"

In this era of mindless binge-watching, fueled by being stuck at home thanks to the Coronavirus, we can easily get overwhelmed by all of our entertainment options.   We're so used to pointless consumption of jejune television that we forget that film can have the power to not just entertain but to move us, to make us feel more human or even closer to God.   Essay two provides the opportunity for you to help each other climb out of the pit of mind-numbing entertainment and ascend to the heights of filmic art.

Using the guidelines that John Warner provides on pages 30-34 of *The Writer's Practice,* your mission is to write an evaluation of a film with the entire class as your audience, all the while keeping the expectations of the academic audience in the back of your mind.

Evaluations are essentially arguments in which you determine whether an object or event is good or bad or indifferent and provide evidence to support your claim. You will have to describe your subject briefly; however, the focus will not be on description or summary, but on analysis and argument. You will need to provide the criteria by which you evaluate your subject, bearing in mind that much of your audience might not agree that *Citizen Kane* would be a better movie if it had ninjas or pirates or zombies. In other words, your criteria must be reasonable and fair.

As you work on this project, consider the following questions: Is the film good, bad, both, neither? Why should we see the film? What does the movie teach us? Might the film appeal to a very limited audience, or does it have wide appeal?   If you write about a film that many critics believe to be the greatest of its genre, but you disagree, beware of the weight of tradition that you will be working against. Finally, you will not need to refer to other critics' opinions of the film, unless you feel the desperate need to engage in scholarly discourse with a misguided colleague.

To effectively respond to this assignment, I imagine you will have to write a three-to-five-page thesis-driven paper that answers the following prompt:

To what extent is your movie worth watching (or avoiding)? What makes it so good (or bad)?

Don't rely on your memory to write about a film; see it again. And again. And again. And again?

Final Draft Due: **Tuesday, March 2nd**

For this assignment you may choose any film found on the *Arts and Faith Top 100 Films* compiled by *Image* Journal. You will find this list at https://imagejournal.org/top-100-films/. Don't even ask about writing an essay on any movie not on this list (although I **might** consider allowing you to write on a film from the other lists found on the same website curated by *Image Journal*). I **highly** recommend you choose a movie you have not seen.

You may be able to access some of these films through the Kanopy database, found on the Nyack College Library Website. Many of the films are available on HBO Max. You may find some of the films on Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hulu, or other subscription services. You are resourceful. I know you have ways of finding movies.

Like the "How Do I?" essay, grading for this essay will be unconventional. Operating under the assumption that practice makes perfect, your grade will be determined by the amount of work you do; in other words, you get to determine the grade you will receive. The more you write, the better you will become (in theory, anyway). Here is how the grades will be determined:

The first thing you should know is that all plus grades (A+, B+, C+, D+) are reserved for recognition of quality work. I will make the **rare** choice to assign a plus grade to writers whose work is exemplary. Other than plus grades, the grades will be determined by what you turn in to the dropbox.

To get a grade of A, you must turn in a total of 2,500+ words.

To get a grade of A-, you must turn in a total of 2,250-2,500 words.

To get a grade of B, you must turn in a total of 2,000-2,250 words.

To get a grade of B-, you must turn in a total of 1,750-2,000 words.

To get a grade of C, you must turn in a total of 1,500-1,750 words.

To get a grade of C-, you must turn in a total of 1,250-1,500 words.

To get a grade of D, you must turn in a total of 1,000-1,250 words.

To get a grade of D-, you must turn in a total of 750-1,000 words.

To get a grade of F, you must turn in a total of 375-750 words.

To get a grade of 0, you must turn in fewer than 375 words.

You may be wondering how you can write 375-2,500 words for this assignment. Think of this assignment like a portfolio. At the core of the assignment will be the final essay you turn in and identify as the completed "Should I?" essay. In the document you turn into the dropbox, the

actual completed essay should come first. I envision this essay being from three to five double-spaced pages, depending on your topic. That should yield about 900 to 1,500 words. The rest of the word count can be reached by including the work you do for the *Process* section questions in steps 1 through 8 (including a description of which models you looked at), a reflection on how you implemented any feedback you received in step 7, and submitting your responses to the *Reflection* section. All together, you should be able to produce 2,500 words.