

Students report finding it particularly useful when professors... (Susannah Shmurak, May 15, 2007)

Emphasize their availability (or make meetings mandatory)

Recognize that the student might have anxiety about meeting with you rather than assuming the student doesn't care or is lazy. A number of students said that being required to meet with their professors helped them overcome their initial fears.

Clearly outline expectations on assignment sheets

Explain words that might be difficult to understand when first encountered, such as critique, analyze, and respond. Students really appreciate when professors in introductory classes assume they are not familiar with the form expected and offer detailed explanations of the elements of lab reports or the numerous steps one takes to complete a research paper.

Make sample papers available

Make a sample of a similar assignment available on the course website or in your office, so students can begin to understand disciplinary conventions and expectations. Consider adding more exemplary papers as they come in, so students can see that there are many ways to complete an assignment successfully.

Use rubrics and give specific feedback

Students often wonder why they get Bs when they are offered few or no suggestions about what they might do differently. Let them know what they're doing well and give them specific comments about how to improve; specify that they don't have a thesis or that their thesis is too simple or that their paragraphs don't advance the central argument. Students will be more invested in their work if they see that their ideas are being taken seriously, so engage with their ideas as well as giving feedback on writing. Expect that they might not fully understand your comments until they talk to you about them.

Rubrics are particularly effective for letting students see a breakdown of the different criteria we use to evaluate writing and show them which skills they need to work on. (See reverse for a sample.)

Build revision into the syllabus

Consider having drafts due for peer revision a week before the final due date. Even if the feedback students receive from one another isn't immensely helpful, the draft deadline helps to reinforce the expectation that papers should be drafted early and revised rather than turned out the night before. Reading peers' work also helps students see writing problems difficult to detect when they read their own writing.

Shorter, "low-stakes" assignments can also provide opportunities for students to experiment with new concepts and conventions prior to "high-stakes" papers. Consider incorporating some short writing assignments early on and give feedback that will prepare students for more complex and challenging projects.

Paper Evaluation

(Chico Zimmerman, May 15, 2007)

Careful reading of text

This area includes global understanding of the primary texts and various interpretive possibilities; all relevant aspects of the texts are taken into account; writer demonstrates an appropriate sense of complexity of the material; an appropriate sense of opposing interpretations; understanding of possible objections or counter-arguments

0 _____ 25

Textual evidence

This area includes appropriate use and citation of texts; argument is developed with supporting evidence; quotations are relevant and smoothly incorporated into the argument; quotations are not taken out of context;

0 _____ 25

Overall quality of writing

Structure and Organization: This area includes: clarity of thought; logic of argument; well-structured paragraphs; overall organization; a conclusion that is more than recapitulation of the main points

0 _____ 25

Clarity of expression: This area includes: ease of readability; appropriate voice, style, and tone; clarity of sentence structure; variety of sentence structure; use of transitions

0 _____ 20

Correctness

This area includes: use of complete sentences; absence of usage and grammar errors; accurate punctuation; accurate spelling; careful proofreading; and overall neatness

0 ____ 5

General Comments:

Grade:

Note:

1. I am happy to discuss any questions you may have about the evaluation of your paper.
2. Re-writes may be turned in up to 2 weeks after the original due date.

Classics 110 -- Winter 2007

(Chico Zimmerman, May 15, 2007)

Research Report:

GOALS: To familiarize you with some of the vast array of resources available for the study of Classics; to allow you to practice some of the critical skills necessary for finding and utilizing those resources; to accomplish preliminary research for the upcoming group presentations

PROCESS: First, conduct some preliminary research on your assigned topic by using the Oxford Classical Dictionary (Third edition, 1996), which you will find in the Reference section of the Library. There are also copies of the OCD in the Classics Department student library, and each of us has one in our office. You may need to translate your topic into a more general area corresponding to an entry in the Dictionary to do this. (We will be happy to help you if you are having trouble). Make a note of the entry or entries where you find your information and any bibliography the article mentions.

Then, with the help of Heather Tompkins (the Library Liaison with the Classics dept.) or one of the other reference librarians, do a MUSE search and locate as many of the resources as possible in our library—both primary (i.e. ancient), and secondary—which would give you further, more detailed information on your question/topic. Note that the primary source you find should be in English translation (unless you read Greek and Latin).

Now, go into the stacks and physically interact with these sources. Why are we asking you to do this? We want you to get a sense of the contents of your sources and the wealth of information one can glean from them. Look at the Table of Contents; the Index; the Bibliography; the Plates or Maps. Look at the books nearby on the shelf. Take notes.

Finally, with the help of Heather Tompkins once again or another reference librarian, find a website (or websites) with content having to do with your selected topic. Look carefully through the website and make notes on its content, the links it includes, and the sources it cites for its information.

PRODUCT: This exercise will result in a document that has two parts:

- 1.) There should be an annotated bibliography, containing at least 8 sources; at least one of them must be a primary (ancient) source, and no more than three of them may be internet sources. Your bibliography should contain a brief description (one or two sentences) of the source and how it will be useful for your upcoming research project. We want the sources cited with full, proper citations with the brief description below. Please do not check your sources out of the Library at this time. Leave the resources for other members of your group to find and use. (However, if there is a pertinent resource that our Library does not have, do order it from Interlibrary Loan Services so that your group can have it for the research project.)
- 2.) There should be a short narrative describing your search process and reflecting on what you learned. How did you structure your Muse search? What other search tools did you use? What did you find most useful? What have you learned about finding and using research tools in Classics?

Your research report is due on Moodle by class on February 21st.

Short Paper Number One: Athens' External Concerns in 415 BCE

Due on Moodle BY CLASS Friday, January 19th

3-5 pages, double-spaced

CAMS 110: Introduction to Cinema & Media Studies
Carol Donelan
Fall 2006

Film Analysis Assignment

Draw a segmentation and write a five-page, thesis-driven analytical essay on one of the narrative feature films listed below, all of which are or will be on reserve at the library:

Some Like It Hot (Billy Wilder, 1959)
Shane (George Stevens, 1953)
The Best Years of Our Lives (William Wyler, 1946)
North by Northwest (Alfred Hitchcock, 1959)
Psycho (Alfred Hitchcock, 1960)
The African Queen (John Huston, 1951)
The Grapes of Wrath (John Ford, 1940)
West Side Story (Jerome Robbins & Robert Wise, 1961)
Mr. Smith Goes to Washington (Frank Capra, 1939)
To Kill A Mockingbird (Robert Mulligan, 1962)
The Third Man (Carol Reed, 1949)
My Darling Clementine (John Ford, 1946)
Rebel Without a Cause (Nicholas Ray, 1955)

From Viewing a Film to Writing a Film Essay: Steps to Take

- View the film several times.
- Segment the film.
 - An outline format or linear diagram will help you visualize formal relations (compare beginnings and endings, identify parallels and patterns of development). Usually a feature-length film will have no more than 40 sequences and now fewer than five, so if you find yourself dividing the film into tiny bits or huge chunks, you may want to shift to a different level of generality.
- Try to identify the most important themes and techniques in the film. Can you detect any patterns or trends?
- Formulate a working thesis and argument for your essay.
- Outline the argument. If possible, use full sentences for headings because they can then become your topic sentences.
- Develop the central idea of each paragraph with details from the film.
- Revise your essay, checking for vague or illogical organization.
- Proofread for surface errors in spelling and grammar.
 - Film titles are italicized: *Broken Blossoms*
 - it's = it is
 - check spelling of mise-en-scène
- Select a title that reflects the main argument of your paper.

General Advice and Tips for Writing in this Course: (Chico Zimmerman, May 15, 2007)

Find something you want to say. This may sound way too obvious, but most students begin writing before they really know where their interest in a given topic is, or what they might want actually to say about a topic. Often, students just want the writing experience to be *over*, so they begin writing with too little fuel to burn, and the resulting essay can't generate any real heat and/or light. It is usually a good idea to prime the pump by re-reading some of the material one will use as evidence. Usually when a student does plunge right in to write, they do not really find out what they want to say until they have written quite a bit of their essay. There is nothing wrong with using writing in this way as part of your discovery process, but this is writing that your audience should NOT experience. Find your interest BEFORE you write your final draft.

Write about what you don't know or understand. This might seem counter-intuitive, given what I have just said. However, you will find your interest in a topic more quickly (and be more likely to sustain that interest throughout the writing process) if you can focus on something that you can't immediately explain to yourself. Writing then becomes a process of solving a problem for yourself and explaining your problem and its solution to an audience.

Keep your audience in mind. I find that many problems in student writing arise from the fact that they are confused about who their audience is, or worse, about the fact that they have an audience at all. Writing is about communicating your thoughts to OTHERS, and the test of good writing is how well another person can follow your thinking. It is YOUR job, as the writer, to make yourself understood by your audience. Before you start writing, think about who will be reading your essay. What can you assume that they know about your topic? What do you need to articulate explicitly? Play it safe by assuming a very small amount of good will on the part of the reader (although readers are generally pretty generous).

Keep a good reader in your life. Since it is often very difficult to know how well an audience can follow your thinking, it is essential to have some one **other than yourself**, someone with some critical distance, to read through a draft of your writing. Ask your reader if he or she can summarize your main point and your conclusion. If they cannot do so easily, find out where the confusion lies. This type of reading is NOT just proofreading for surface errors (although it is wonderful to have someone read for those as well). This is a test to see whether you have communicated clearly your main arguments. This is a lot to ask of someone, so be grateful for their generosity. For this course, I have thoughtfully provided just such a reader. His name is Tom Fry and he will be our writing assistant for the term. Because I believe so strongly in having one's work read a various stages of the drafting process, I will be requiring you to meet with Tom **prior to at least 2** of your assignments.

Take ownership of your writing. All of the above advice assumes that you WANT to produce good writing, and I assume, all things being equal, that you do want this. It is hard to avoid, however, the resentment one feels when one is asked to do something hard and time-consuming, whose rewards are perhaps not immediately obvious (and writing can be all these things). I wish that I could explain the rewards for your efforts in such a way as to make them seem desirable, but I fear I would fail at this. It might help for you to regard writing as your emissary to the outside world, and therefore, to see to it that it represents you well wherever it goes. That is the way I have come to think about my writing, and it helps me to make the effort to do it as well as possible.

Think process not product. Writing needs to be understood as a process (which yields a product to be sure), and I'd like to focus on the process in this course. This means that you need to think about your writing as something that CAN change and improve. You are not fated to be stuck with the paper that you produced in a single, cheerless session in the wee hours. Your writing should not be a "one-shot" effort, although you have doubtless experimented with this approach. The trouble I see with most student writing is that it is not really sure what it is trying to say until the very end. That is a reasonable outcome for a first draft, but it will not do for a final draft. Often, a student needs to begin with the final paragraph she has written and start from there to construct a second, more polished draft. This means that you must leave yourself sufficient time to work through several drafts of any given piece of writing. NO ONE writes a great essay in one draft, though I dare say we have all tried.

