

WRS 106
First-Year Writing II
Dr. Adam Abraham
Spring 2025

ANALYSIS

Rough draft DUE: Wednesday 26 February
Bring HARD COPY to class

First Draft DUE: Friday 28 February – Wednesday 5 March
In Zoom conference (to be scheduled)

Final draft DUE: Friday 7 March by 4:30 pm
Email to axa4376@miami.edu
Submit as an attachment in Microsoft Word or pdf form
In the subject line write “ANALYSIS”

For the second essay of the course, each student will practice analyzing a film through a lens—that is, a critical vantage point. You will use a certain text to *read* another text. Choose ONE of the three documentaries screened for the course (*High School*, *Harlan County U.S.A.*, *The Thin Blue Line*). Do not choose more than one. You may select the one from your group presentation or a different one. You will then use the Roland Barthes essay “The Death of the Author” to read and interpret the documentary.

This is NOT an exercise in compare and contrast. Do NOT compare the documentary and the essay. Instead, use one to analyze the other. To prepare, you should re-read the Barthes essay. Next, screen your selected documentary one more time and observe it through the lens of the essay’s argument. Take notes. Then write your draft ...

STEP 1. Introduce the documentary. Be sure to mention the title (in italics), the year, and the director’s name. Summarize the content (one or two sentences). Describe the historical context, the filmmaking techniques, the significance of the film that you chose. (Approximately two paragraphs.)

STEP 2. Introduce the lens. Explain (briefly) what Barthes is saying. Then use the lens to discuss the documentary. What did you notice that you did not see before? What

does the Barthes essay reveal about the film and the filmmaking? How does the film illuminate or illustrate what Barthes is saying? Be specific. Choose particular scenes and moments in the documentary. Be sure to quote Barthes (with quotation marks) once or twice. (Approximately two paragraphs.)

And for the overachiever ... STEP 3. How does the documentary point out weaknesses in Barthes's argument? What does reading the documentary through this lens fail to achieve? What does the lens miss or misunderstand? (One paragraph will suffice here.)

Please note that the questions above are meant to prompt your thinking. Do not mechanically answer each and every one. Use the questions as a springboard.

REQUIREMENTS

- Use a normal, 12-point font, with serifs, such as Times or Times New Roman.
- Double-space EVERY LINE. Double-space is not single-space or space-and-one-half.
- Write in multiple paragraphs. Indent each new paragraph. Do no skip lines.
- Attend a peer-review session in class on Wednesday 26 February. Bring one printed hard copy of the rough draft.
- Meet with the instructor for a fifteen-minute conference on Zoom. A sign-in sheet is available (adamabraham.info). Email the First Draft to axa4376@miami.edu before your conference begins.
- Maximum length = 1,000 words.

GRADING

- The essay is worth 10 points, which is 10 percent of your final grade.
- Any student who misses the peer review or who shows up without a printed hard copy will lose 5 points. Any student who misses the conference will lose 5 points.
- Otherwise, grading is holistic. The assignment will challenge you. Do what is asked. Give it a try. Consider this to be an exercise in critical thinking.
- If you want more guidance, feel free to visit during office hours or set an appointment.