

Suggestions for second assignment

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Several students have discussed the 2nd paper with me. I realize that the assignment requires AT LEAST two movies.

Here are some suggestions—some of which are in the assignment but bear repeating.

This paper is not about finding the truth. You are not to conduct research to demonstrate what is correct or incorrect in a movie. You are not to give your opinion about the correctness or incorrectness of the film (except in a paragraph at the end, if you want). This paper asks you to stay entirely with the movies and **ANALYZE** them. What are their messages? We can't, of course, read the screenwriter's or director's mind, but we can interpret what a movie seems to be about. What are the themes? What do the speeches, conversations, gestures, etc., etc., tell the audience?

Do not spend a lot of time rehashing the plot. One paragraph per movie, max. It's best to discuss the plot in the context of a theme you're analyzing.

Given that the reader knows your essay is an interpretation, you may be more forceful in your language than in the first essay—you can make unsupported assertions such as: "The interaction between Joe Blow and Connie Jones reveals a basic misunderstanding about Italian-American experience in the U.S." The reader understands very clearly that this is your interpretation, your analysis.

Remember, movies are intended to make money—to draw as large a boxoffice as possible. The people who make movies will have other goals as well, but a producer is there, thinking about the bottom line. Keeping this in mind (movies try to appeal to a large audience) will help you analyze the action, characters, etc.

This paper does not ask you to list all the themes you discover. Choose the themes that interest you the most, and that appear in all the movies you're discussing.

Also remember that comedies are intended to be funny, so don't analyze them as if they were totally serious movies. Comedy may have satire, irony, sarcasm, silly situations, etc., because the goal is to make people laugh.