

FILM 421: Los on Film
Research Paper Information
Fall 2018

Purpose: The purpose of writing the research paper is to allow you to explore more deeply some aspect of Los Angeles literature and/or film in which you are interested. Despite the fact that this paper is longer than your others, you nevertheless will still be attempting to make one specific point about your subject matter, and to argue the validity of that point. This means that although your paper will likely have a good deal of factual information in it, your ultimate purpose will not be to present facts, but rather **to use those facts to make your argument**. The kinds of questions you will want to consider as you select your topic and write your paper are: What is important about the subject I've chosen? Is its importance primarily literary, cultural, historical, social, or something else? What is the point I want to make about my subject?

Subject: Anything that interests you about the books, films, articles, or stories that we read or watch in class, or related works or themes. Your paper can take a literary, cultural, historical, or social approach as long as it discusses one or more literary works and/or films that you believe are significant because of their being set in Los Angeles; these can be works we have studied in class or others that you find interesting. You have a lot of latitude in this regard because I'd like you to be truly interested in the topic that you write about.

Length: 2,500 words, computer-printed, double-spaced, 1-inch margins, 12-point font.

Sample Topics (ideas to get you thinking):

- "The Use of Los Angeles [or a more specific area] Locations in *Film X*"
- "The Idea of Artificiality in Films about Hollywood"
- "The [Hispanic] [Asian] [African-American] [Other] Experience in Contemporary Los Angeles Film"
- "Los Angeles As Depicted in Film Noir"
- "Dreamland: Southern California As Depicted in Films X, Y, and Z"

These are just possibilities to give you some ideas. I'd be glad to talk to you individually about topics and films

Description of Topic Due: Monday, October 8

List of Resources Due: Thursday, October 29. **Send your list to me via e-mail.** Hard-copy sources (books, articles, etc.) should be listed using the MLA style. If you are using Web-based sources, copy and paste the URL into your e-mail message.

Courtesy Deadline (Optional): Monday, November 5. If you hand in at least the first three pages of your paper (or more, if you wish) by November 5, I will review them and turn them back to you by November 15. These pages should be in finished, printed format.

Final Deadline: Thursday, November 29.

Number of Sources: At least five. The books or films we have discussed in class or that serve as the subject of your paper do not count as any of these sources. **Do not cite printed or online encyclopedia articles, Cliff Notes, Masterplots, or similar sources as references or otherwise**

include them in your paper. Do not cite **Brittanica.com**. **Wikipedia**, the **Internet Movie Database**, **filmsite.org**, or **similar sites** or **otherwise include them in your paper**. (You can, of course, read them for background information and as a starting point.) See me before you turn in your paper if you have any questions about the suitability of a source.

Style and Format: Please use the MLA style for your paper. Consult one of the following sources:

- “Documenting Sources in MLA Style: A Bedford/St. Martin’s Supplement,” 2016
- Also available online at <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

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Sources: All sources cited must be photocopied and submitted with the paper. You need only to copy those pages from which you actually cite. Please highlight the passages (on the photocopies) from which you cite.

Some Helpful Databases:

- *Academic Search Elite*: Provides full text for journals covering the social sciences, humanities, general science, multi-cultural studies, education, and more.
- *Dissertations and Theses*
- *J-Stor*
- *Literature Resource Center*: Articles pertaining to literary works and their authors.
- *Los Angeles Times (Historic)*: access issues from 1881 to 1985
- *MLA International Bibliography*. More articles that pertain to the humanities, particularly literature.
- *Project Muse*: Provides online access to the full text of scholarly journals in the arts and humanities, social sciences, and mathematics covering the fields of literature and criticism, history, the visual and performing arts, cultural studies, education, political science.
- *Research Library*: Provides citations and abstracts from scholarly journals, including the humanities.
- You may also want to try Google Scholar

There are other sources of similar information, and access to electronic databases in particular changes frequently. **If you can't find what you're looking for, talk to me or ask a reference librarian!**

Audience: Remember to write to an audience that exists beyond the walls of our classroom. You should imagine yourself writing to an audience that is thoughtful and well educated—perhaps readers of *The New Yorker* or *The Atlantic Monthly* or the Opinion or Calendar sections of the *Los Angeles Times*.