

How to write a wonderful Cultural Studies Paper?

- Read the instructions on the handout carefully
- Choose the topic
- Make sure you understand the topic/question you choose
- Define the task at hand and your approach (you should use this definition in the introduction)

Theory

- Identify and make sure that you understand the theory you will be using
- Summarize the main points of the theory you will be using. It is easiest to compile a few bullet points, you can then refer back to
- Write down the citations that capture particularly well the main ideas of the theory

Case Studies

- Choose and find information about case studies (e.g. the songs you will analyze or the subcultural groups you will study)
- Make detailed notes about these case studies
- As far as possible carry out close-readings of case studies

What is close-reading?

- EVERYTHING IS ESSENTIALLY A TEXT WHICH CAN BE ANALYSED!!!!!!
- What is the main point the text is making? How is this point conveyed?
- Looked at the detail that is used to convey the general message

Analyze this passage

‘Clarisa was born before the city had electricity, she lived to see the television coverage of the first astronaut levitating on the moon, and she died of amazement when the Pope came for a visit and was met in the street by homosexuals dressed up as nuns. She spent her childhood among pots of ferns and corridors lighted by oil lamps. Days went by slowly in those times. Clarisa never adjusted to the fits and starts of modern time’

(Isabel Allende, ‘Clarisa’)

And now try this!

I'm just a Buffalo soldier

In the heart of America

Stolen from Africa, brought to America

Said he was fighting on arrival

Fighting for survival

Said he was a Buffalo Soldier

Win the war for America

(Bob Marley, 'Buffalo Soldier')

And this!



- Depending on your chosen case studies you might find yourself also analyzing, for instance
- ✓ Comments on social networks
- ✓ You Tube videos
- ✓ Scenes from films
- ✓ Interviews

- Your close readings provide the EVIDENCE that supports a convincing argument!
- They can prove, for example, a theory right or wrong.
- Do not just say something, back it always up with evidence
- Even whilst using theory let the sources speak to you- let them decide what you will argue!
- Do not simply create a check-list to prove the theory right or wrong

Secondary Sources

- I care especially about what YOU think. Everyone can repeat the ideas of others, not everyone can articulate their own ideas
- The secondary sources are there to show that you are familiar with the wider scholarship and to support your argument

Where do I find the secondary sources?

- JStor is a database where you can easily search for articles on ANYTHING! You can access JStor through the Nazarbayev University Website
- Also the library has a significant collection of works related to different fields of cultural studies. GO TO THE LIBRARY! (Do not just rely on online sources)

Writing!

- Ask yourself what makes a good essay!
- Based on everything that the instructor has already said what makes a good CULTURAL STUDIES essay?
- **PLAN!!!! DRAW UP AN OUTLINE.** No good academic paper was ever written out of pure unplanned inspiration.
- Discuss your outline with the instructor well ahead of the deadline

Writing

- Clarity is the key to success. Do not take anything for granted, rather write for a reader who does have no knowledge of the topic
- Know where you are going from the very start, that is to say, the introduction. The best trick is to write the introduction last!
- Consider your essay as a map which is going to take the reader from point A to C via B. There needs to be continuity and consistence in the argument

Writing

- Less is always more in academic papers. It is better to focus on less points and cover them well than try to spread yourself too thinly
- The conclusion should not be repetitive (e.g. In this essay I said a), b), and c)) Try to summarize your main results without repeating yourself. Save some energy for the conclusion- maybe write it on a different day)))

Writing

- Read through your work. Sloppy work with typos and inconsistencies will be awarded a low mark no matter how great your ideas
- Read it through the next day with hindsight
- If unsure come and discuss your work in progress with the instructor
- VISIT THE WRITING CENTRE

Presentation

- Always follow the usual conventions of academic papers
- ✓ Write in Times New Roman, 12 font
- ✓ Double space your paper
- ✓ Reference the ideas of others, otherwise this could be counted as plagiarism

Referencing

- There are a number of different referencing systems (MHRA, MLA, Chicago etc.). You can use any one you like but you need to be **CONSISTENT**
- The rules of these referencing systems can be found all online (just Google the one you prefer to use)

Referencing

- The referencing of the ideas of others in the actual essay should be done through footnotes, endnotes, or parenthetical references in the body of the text. Different referencing systems have different rules as you will see
- At the end of the essay you should also include a bibliography of the sources quoted and those that have influenced your ideas

Example of Bibliographical Entry (Book)

- ✓ Name of the author (Surname, First name,)
- ✓ Title of Book in Italics
- ✓ Publication (place, press, year) details is parenthesis

E.g. Sommer, Doris, *Foundational Fictions* (Berkeley:
University of California Press, 1991)

Chapter in a Book

- ✓ Name of Author (Surname, First Name)
- ✓ Title of chapter in inverted commas (‘’) followed by comma and the word in
- ✓ Title of the Book in Italics
- ✓ ed. by ... (name of the editor)
- ✓ Publication details (place, press, year)
- ✓ Page range of chapter

E.g. Alonso, Carlos, ‘The Burden of Modernity’, in *The Places of History*, ed. by Doris Sommer (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), pp. 94-103.

Journal Article

- ✓ Name of Author (Surname, First Name)
- ✓ Title of Article in Inverted Commas (“”)
- ✓ Name of Journal in Italics
- ✓ Volume number, Issue Number followed by year of publication in parenthesis
- ✓ Page range of Article

E.g. Jameson, Fredric, ‘Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism’, *Social Text*, 15 (1986), 65-88.