

ENG 3116: The Documentary Film

3:05-6:05 p.m. EST Thursdays (Synchronously @ [Zoom here](#)); *screenings*: Weekly during the first hour to 90 minutes of class

Professor: L. Lamar Wilson, Ph.D.; *Office Hours*: By appointment

Contact: llwilson@fsu.edu, proflamarwilson, on Gchat (during office hours)

Please allow 24 hours for response to email. For email sent after 9 p.m., the 24-hour window begins the following morning, when it likely will be read.

Description

Documentary film has gained stature among film genres, especially during this time of reckoning with the inequities that have allowed abuses of power and hierarchies to disenfranchise for centuries those who are deemed “other” because of racial caste, gender identity, sexuality, socioeconomic status, and other cultural markers. This semester, we will contemplate the following question: How has this genre gone from the bedrock of cinema in the late nineteenth century to a niche genre with the rise of Hollywood studio-driven, commercial entertainment of escapism in the succeeding one to a more democratized agent for truth telling, technological innovation, and social change in the past three decades? At the beginning of cinema in the 1890s, all films were documentaries, and the conventions of “realness” developed at the time became the foundational aesthetics of commercial cinema. This new course, a companion for ENG 3110 (Film Genres) and others, will chart the evolution of the form’s convention as it continues to redefine the construction of “real”-ness, explore the nature of truth in a post-fact society, and interrogate the politics of representation and the sociological impact of the moving image. (This course may satisfy Liberal Studies Humanities and Cultural Practices requirements, the EWM requirement, and an LMC elective.) Some of the required viewing includes disturbing images. I will always attempt to provide content warnings in advance.

Course Objectives

The Liberal Studies for the 21st Century Program at Florida State University builds an educational foundation that will enable FSU graduates to thrive both intellectually and materially and to support themselves, their families, and their communities through a broad and critical engagement with the world in which they live and work. Liberal Studies offers a transformative experience. In fulfillment of its Humanities in Cultural Practice requirements, students will demonstrate the ability to:

- ◆ Interpret intellectual or artistic works within a cultural context;
- ◆ Use a cultural, artistic, or philosophical approach to analyze some aspect of human experience;
- ◆ Demonstrate the relevance of ideas in understanding cultural expression;
- ◆ Communicate arguments central to the course using clear, coherent prose;
- ◆ Analyze and evaluate ethical positions on responsibility towards political oppression;
- ◆ Analyze and evaluate ethical positions on what is exposed and what is hidden in the image;
- ◆ Analyze and evaluate ethical positions on the politics of narrative and representation;
- ◆ Define and use terminologies that describe films’ construction to analyze films, including but not limited to colonialism, imperialism, postcolonialism, camera angle, mise-en-scène, character, shot, panning, tracking, close-up, montage, sequence, cut, and zoom;
- ◆ Analyze films in relation to histories of conflict and power struggles;
- ◆ Apply some of these concepts in the construction of their own arguments, the analysis of texts and methods of inquiry both in this field and others; and
- ◆ Use a cultural, artistic and/or philosophical approach to analyze aspects of human experience.

Required Readings

Bill Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary* (2017, 3rd Ed., unlimited use)

Betsy McLane, *A New History of Documentary Film* (2nd Ed.)

Broderick Fox, *Documentary Media: History, Theory, Practice* (2018 Ed., recommended for practitioners, one person may access at a time at this [permalink](#); search for author name & time. You can download up to 92 pages using PDF software that doesn’t expire *or* download the whole book and check it out for one day.) This site may be helpful: <http://filmanalysis.yctl.org/>

Grading

- ◆ Class attendance/participation: 100 points
- ◆ Midterm/Late-term Exam = 100 points (Take-home, due April 1)
- ◆ 2 short papers: 100 points (at least 3 pages, 50 points each, due Feb. 12 & April 11)
- ◆ 1 close film analysis: 100 points (at least 5 pages due Tues., April 20 @ 7:30 p.m.)

100-97 = A+	96-94 = A	93-90 = A-
89-87 = B+	86-84 = B	83-80 = B-
79-77 = C+	76-74 = C	73-70 = C-
69-67 = D+	64-66 = D	<63 = F

375-400 = A	374-358 = A-	
357-346 = B+	345-330 = B	329-318 = B-
317-306 = C+	305-294 = C	293-278 = C-
277-266 = D+	265-254 = D	<253 = F

Weekly Breakdown

Week 1, Jan. 7: Introductions & Syllabus Discussion

Screenings: A selection of Edison, Biograph, and Lumière films, including *Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory* (1895), *American Mutoscope and Biograph Company's Cake Walk* and other *videos* (1903), *Nanook of the North* (Robert J. Flaherty, 1922), and *In the Street* (Janice Loeb, 1948)

Week 2, Jan. 14: The Origins of Documentary Realism, “the Gaze,” & Ethnography

Screenings: A selection of Edison, Biograph, and Lumière films, including *Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory* (1895), *American Mutoscope and Biograph Company's Cake Walk* and other *videos* (1903), *Nanook of the North* (Robert J. Flaherty, 1922), and *In the Street* (Janice Loeb, 1948)

Reading: Nichols, Chapter 1 (1-28); McLane, Chapters 1-2 (1-39)

Week 3, Jan. 21: Limits of Ethnographic Realism

Screenings: *Moana* (with diegetic sound, with soundtrack, Robert J. Flaherty, 1926)

Fieldwork (Zora Neale Hurston, 1928)

Trance and Dance in Bali (Margaret Mead, 1952)

*Cane Toads: An Unnatural History** and *Cane Toads: The Conquest** (1988 original, 2010 “remake”, Mark Lewis)

Reading: John Grierson, “First Principles of Documentary” (Canvas)

Nichols, Chapter 2 (29-47); McLane, Chapter 5 (73-91); Fox, Chapter 1-2 (as a review)

Michael Taussig, “Cane Toads: An Unnatural History” (1990, Canvas)

Week 4, Jan. 28: Propaganda & Documenting the War for the West

Screenings: *The Battle of Midway** (U.S. Navy, 1942)

*Triumph of the Will** (Leni Riefenstahl, 1935)

*The Wonderful, Horrible Life of Leni Riefenstahl** (Ray Müller, 1993)

*Human Remains** (Jay Rosenblatt, 1998)

Reading: Susan Sontag, “Fascinating Fascism” &

David B. Hinton, “An Exchange on Leni Riefenstahl” (1974, also on Canvas)

Nichols, Chapters 3-4 (48-88); McLane, Chapter 6 (93-115)

Week 5, Feb. 4: Postwar Journalism in the States

Screenings: *Harvest of Shame* (Edward R. Murrow, 1960)

Ethnic Notions and *Color Adjustment* (Marlon Riggs, 1987, 1991)

Reading: Gustavo Arellano, “Harvest of Paternalism”

Jericho Brown, “Marlon Riggs, Ancestor”

Nichols, Chapters 6 & 9 (review of modes w/charts, 104-159; help w/writing, 194-208)

Week 6, Feb. 11: Limits of Journalistic Realism

Screenings: *F for Fake* (Orson Welles, 1973)

Manufacturing Consent (Mark Achbar, Peter Wintonock, & Noam Chomsky, 1992)

Reading: McLane, Chapter 7 (117-153), Fox, Chapter 5

First Short Paper Due: Friday, Feb. 12 @ 11:59 p.m.

*This film contains depictions of violence, discussions of sensitive matters such as substance abuse and sexuality, or otherwise uses objectionable language.

Week 7, Feb. 18, Documenting Anti-Imperialism Abroad

Screenings: *La hora de los hornos* (*The Hour of the Furnaces*)* (Getino and Solinas, 1968)

*The Battle of Chile** (Patricio Guzmán, 1975, 1976, 1979 [first part of 3rd film linked])

Reading: Getino and Solinas, “Towards a Third Cinema” (1970-1971)

Nichols, Chapter 8 (159-193)

Week 8 and 9, Feb. 25 & March 4: Race/Caste

Screenings: *Finally Got the News** (Lichtman, Gessner, Bird, 1970)

Harlan County, U.S.A. (Barbara Kopple, 1976)

*Killer of Sheep** (Charles Burnett, 1977)

*The Black Power Mixtape 1967-1975** (Göran Olsson, 2011)

Reading: Fox, Chapter 6 (“In the Long Haul” section), McLane, Chapter 12 (243-270)

Michael Renov, “Newsreel: Old and New—Towards a Historical Profile”

Dan Georgakas, “*Finally Got the News*: The Making of a Radical Film”

Week 10, March 11: Gender Gains

Screenings: *With Babies and Banners: Story of Women’s Emergency Brigade** (Lorraine Gray, 1979)

*Tongues Untied** (Marlon Riggs, 1989)

*Paris Is Burning** (Jenny Livingston, 1990)

Creating Gender-Inclusive Schools (New Day Films, 2016)

Reading: bell hooks, “Is Paris Burning?” (Canvas)

Riggs, “Black Macho Revisited: Reflections of a Snap! Queen” (Canvas)

Judith Butler, “Gender Is Burning: Questions of Appropriation and Subversion” (Canvas)

McLane, Chapter 13 (271-300)

Week 11, March 18: Documenting Intellectual and Physical Difference

Screenings: *The Collector of Bedford Street* (Alice Elliott, 2002)

Body & Soul: Diana & Kathy (Alice Elliott, 2007)

Crip Camp (James Lebrecht, Nicole Newnham, 2020)

Readings: Nichols, Chapters 6 & 9 (review of modes w/charts, 104-159; help w/writing, 194-208)

Week 12 & 13, March 25 & April 1: The Avant-garde & Cinema Vérité

Screenings: *Man with the Movie Camera** (Dziga Vertov, 1929)

Un chien Andalou (*The Andalusian Dog*)* (Luis Buñuel & Salvador Dalí, 1929)

Reading: Dziga Vertov, *Kino-Eye: The Writings of Dziga Vertov*

(“Introduction,” xv-lvi, and especially “We: Variant of a Manifesto,” 67-71)

NYT review of *Un chien Andalou*

McLane, Chapter 11 (219-241)

Midterm Due: Friday, April 2 @ 11:59 p.m.

Animals Are Beautiful People (Jamie Uys, 1974)

The Beales of Grey Gardens (Albert and David Maysles, 1975)

Reading: Siegfried Kracauer, “Silent Film Comedy” (lecture on his *essay on photography*)

Week 14, April 8: Documentary as Activism

Screening: *The Yes Men Fix the World** (Igor Vamos, Jacques Servin, Kurt Engfehr, 2009)

*The Infiltrators** (Christina Ibarra and Alex Rivera, 2019)

& two of the following four films (your choice)

When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts (Spike Lee, 2006)

The 13th (Ava DuVernay, 2016), *Amend* (Kenny Leon, Reinaldo Marcus Green, et al.)

The Rise of Black Lives Matter (VPRO/Dutch public television, 2016)

Readings: Chris Robé, “Anarchist Aesthetics and U.S. Video Activism” (Canvas)

McLane, Chapter 15 (331-362)

Second Short Paper Due: Sunday, April 11 @ 11:59 p.m.

Week 15, April 15: Mockumentary

Screening: *The Gods Must Be Crazy** (Jamie Uys, 1980)

Jackie’s Back (Robert Townsend, 1999)

*The American Nightmare** (Adam Simon, 2000)

*This film contains depictions of violence, discussions of sensitive matters such as substance abuse and sexuality, or otherwise uses objectionable language.

Readings: Nichols, Chapters 6 & 9 (review of modes w/charts, 104-159; help w/writing, 194-208)

Week 16: April 19-23 Final Exams

Final Essay Due Tues., April 20 @ 7:30 p.m.

(No final exam in this course. Paper serves the exam.)

Additional Guidelines

1. **Attendance is mandatory at both classroom/lectures and screenings.** Regular attendance is absolutely necessary in this interactive course. Synchronous online class time will be spent clarifying concepts from the readings, expanding/challenging those ideas, exploring related ideas, and working toward the completion of assignments. Videos from each class will be saved in Canvas for future access. This intellectual property should not be saved, posted, or shared with anyone outside this course. Students are expected to attend every class with the rare exception of professional obligations, health issues, or personal emergencies. Missed classes require communication with the instructor. All assignments are due by midnight on the due date unless otherwise specified in Canvas; late assignments will be docked one full letter grade per day. Extensions will be granted generously as needed, but they need to be documented in writing (email is fine) and requested 24 hours before the deadline with a new due date specified.
 - a. Your in-class participation will be assessed each class based upon the following criteria:
 - i. Be on time and prepared for class consistently. Complete the required reading, print any required handouts, and bring your laptop and research I've required. You may use a laptop or tablet only for drafting and reviewing texts we are reading; there should be no social media browsing or posting during class.
 - ii. Engage actively during every class period, and always use classroom time productively. Everyone has an off day from time to time, but you should be consistently focused on the texts at hand during class.
 - iii. Produce complete, thoughtful responses to every assignment and turn all work in on time. Post every assignment to Canvas by the assigned deadline.
 - iv. Proofread final drafts to eliminate distracting surface errors and typos. Final drafts won't be perfect, but you should learn any grammar rules that consistently give you trouble.
 - b. ***Synchronous Class Meetings:*** While this course will be delivered online, it will require attendance during the scheduled class time, work turned in at regular intervals, class interactions, collaboration, workshops, conferences, and most of the other features of a face-to-face (f2f) class. Put another way, this is not a self-paced, modularized course that you can complete on your own at whatever pace you'd like. We will meet for the majority of each class period except when noted on the syllabus. I realize that long Zoom meetings can be tiring, so I'll do my best to vary class structure and activities to keep you engaged. Students will be expected to have consistent access to Zoom, Canvas, email, and other communication technologies to complete the course. Please communicate with me if you have technological access issues. All assignments will be submitted electronically in Canvas. To be successful in the course, students must regularly engage in the class and have time to complete readings and projects outside the class time.
 - c. ***Zoom:*** We will use Zoom for our synchronous class meetings, office hours, and conferences. Everyone in the Zoom room must register to enter. When you enter the Zoom class, select a username that reflects your preferred name that I can match up with the course roster. Please indicate your preferred pronouns as well. (For security and logistics, I cannot allow you to join a meeting if you appear only as "iPhone" or a nickname from which I cannot identify you.) During the class time, I'd ask that if you are able, please keep your camera on and your microphone muted until you'd like to speak to the whole class. I realize this may not be possible for all students every class because of technological access issues, so please contact me if you anticipate challenges with your connection or shortly after for unanticipated issues. While having the video on may be uncomfortable, I rely on visual cues as I teach to foster interpersonal connection and to get a sense of the pace of delivery. If you need to step away from the computer, temporarily mute your screen and audio, and then turn the camera back on when you are back. If you keep your camera off for an extended time without contacting me, I will assume you are not present for class that day. I will keep the Chat function operational so you can message the class or

individuals as needed. This is a great place to ask questions, share links and related materials, or ask for clarification. During the class session, please only use the Chat function for class-related business. Please contact Zoom support for questions regarding audio, video, usernames, etc. Technological challenges are beyond our control many times. Please give yourself a few minutes to log onto Zoom before each class period. If you get dropped from the Zoom link, lose your internet connection, or lose power, each class will be recorded and stored within Canvas for your access at a later time. If you have a technology issue, please contact me so you aren't marked as absent. If I lose power or the internet, Zoom should remain open and active. Please give me 10 minutes to log back on. If I'm not back within that time frame, I will email the class whenever I gain access again.

2. Unless I state we'll be using in-class time, complete assigned readings *before* the class in which we are scheduled to discuss them. **Please make sure to bring the reading materials to class to reference during discussion.** Some weeks have more reading than others. Try to plan ahead for the weeks that require extra time.
3. Asynchronous and synchronous assignments will accompany every reading and viewing assignment. On most days, **you will be asked to write or respond to a question for discussion**, sometimes synchronously, using Hypothesis technology. Your question/response could be about a montage, sequence, film editing choices, narrative/ethical concerns, or other matters of critical interest. These questions/responses will serve as partial record of attendance; they will not be accepted via email or credited if posted late on Canvas.
4. Readings and assignments are subject to change. If you are absent, you are responsible for what happens in class and for any changes made in assignments. Build a network so that when you are absent you can find out what you've missed. I will be available to help, but it's important that you build a rapport with your colleagues as well.
5. All written assignments should be typed, double-spaced, in a standard and legible, 12-pt. font (Times New Roman or Garamond). You'll be expected to follow the rules of MLA Style (literature/humanities) as they relate to the assignments. You'll be expected to cite your primary and secondary texts carefully to this end. You also may want to bookmark or purchase a reference text such as *The Penguin Handbook* by Leslie Faigley, Diane Hacker's *A Writer's Reference With Writing About Literature*, or *They Say/I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*, edited by Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein. The "Works Cited" page(s) should not be included as part of the page count. Turnitin technology will be used to access each assignment for plagiarism.
6. The heading of every feeder and assignment should include the following, double-spaced successively in the order listed, in the **upper left corner** of each assignment:
Your Full Name
7. The heading of every feeder and assignment should include the following, double-spaced successively in the order listed, in the **upper left corner** of each assignment:
Your Full Name

Dr. Wilson

Writing 101:C

17 February 2021

In **upper-right corner of every subsequent page**, you should include your last name and the page number (as in Wilson 2) of your work.
 - a) Each heading should be followed by a title that summarizes the theme/thesis of your piece of writing.
8. Cellphones, computers, and other devices only be used during synchronous meetings for coursework.
9. It is my desire and expectation that all will pass this class with high marks. The only reason you won't is that you fail to be a good citizen in our weekly synchronous and asynchronous dialogues or that you violate the university's Academic Honor Policy in any way, particularly by committing **plagiarism, which will result in an automatic failure of the course.** Here's a link again to help

you avoid this issue. If you take material from any source whatsoever, you must cite it and then include the reference in a “Works Cited” list at the end of your paper. Material taken from other sources must be enclosed in quotation marks, while material that is paraphrased must be attributed and cited. Please ask if you have any questions about the proper use and citation of sources.

Free Tutoring

On-campus tutoring and writing assistance is available for many courses at Florida State University. For more information, visit the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) Tutoring Services’ comprehensive list of on-campus tutoring options (see <http://ace.fsu.edu/tutoring> or contact tutor@fsu.edu). High-quality tutoring is available by appointment. These services are offered by tutors trained to encourage the highest level of individual academic success while upholding personal academic integrity.

Land Acknowledgment

I acknowledge that FSU is located on land that is the ancestral and traditional territory of the Apalachee and Muscogee (Creek) Nations and the Miccosukee and Seminole Tribes of Florida. I pay respect to their elders, past and present, and extend that respect to their descendants, to the generations yet unborn, and to all indigenous people. I recognize that this land remains scarred by the histories and ongoing legacies of settler colonial violence, dispossession, and removal. In spite of all of this, and with tremendous resilience, these indigenous nations have remained deeply connected to this territory, to their families, to their communities, and to their cultural ways of life. I recognize the ongoing relationships of care that these nations maintain with this land and extend my gratitude as I live and work as a humble and respectful guest upon their territory. I encourage you to learn about and amplify the contemporary work of the indigenous nations whose land you are on and to endeavor to support indigenous sovereignty in all the ways that you can.

Food and Housing Insecurity Statement

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in this or any course, is urged to contact the [Food for Thought Pantry](#) for support. In addition, please notify me, if you are comfortable doing so, so that I may provide any other resource that I may possess. If you are having trouble accessing books, software, or technology relevant to the course, please let me know that as well. FSU and I want to see you be successful and have all you need to be able to be the best student you can be in this and all of your courses.

Disability Statement

I live with Erb’s palsy and at least two valences of neurodivergence that impact my daily life. I hope that my disclosure allays any fears that I will not be empathic to any student with disabilities who needs academic accommodation. To make sure I know exactly what you need to succeed in this course:

1. Register with and provide documentation to the Office of Accessibility Services;
2. Request that the OAS send me a letter detailing the accommodation you need; and
3. Schedule a meeting with me to discuss the letter to review approved accommodations.

For the latest version of this statement and more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact The Office of Accessibility Services, 874 Traditions Way, 108 Student Services Building, Florida State University Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167; (850) 644-9566 (voice); (850) 644-8504 (TDD) oas@fsu.edu; <https://dsst.fsu.edu/oas/>.

Emergency Contact Information

FSU’s primary communication tool for sending out information is through its website at <https://alerts.fsu.edu/>. In the event of an emergency, students should consult this site for directions.

Civil Interaction/Our Pledge to One Another

This online classroom is a public forum in which we will interact regularly over the next several months. The instructor and students are responsible for the content they share in the class, whether that be in the large-group class session, small group activities, or other interactions. Everyone is expected to treat each other with respect and work in the spirit of cooperation when asked to contribute to discussions, workshops, and small group work. Disagreements are perfectly acceptable; in fact, we might encourage them in the service of learning and growth. The content of this class will include issues such as power, control, objectification, sexism, racism, orientalism, surveillance, disability, etc. In order to create a respectful atmosphere, we will not tolerate the use of language or behavior that discriminates against any individual’s gender, race, class, ethnicity, disability, religion, size, age, or sexual orientation. Remember that in digital communication, communicative

cues differ from face-to-face interaction. We will strive to give each other the benefit of the doubt and assume good will in all communication, but we will address any issues with respectful communication directly. The goal of this class is to create a safe place to explore and communicate ideas on potentially difficult subjects.

Finally, I'll reiterate: In this course, we will watch films that contain compelling—and at times disturbing—images. I will do my best to provide content warnings in advance. At all times, I will work to ensure that we cultivate, as learning guides and peer-mentors working together, a safe, affirming learning community and encourage respect and inclusivity of all members and our diverse worldviews. I will strive to follow the guidelines of this syllabus as listed and to make work engaging and relevant to our objectives; however, I reserve the right to amend this document as the need arises to ensure you are gaining as much as possible from asynchronous and synchronous class time and its activities. In such instances, I will notify you in class and/or via email and will endeavor to provide reasonable time for you to adjust to any changes. I will listen actively and attentively and will be available during office hours as well as during individual conferences. I will do my best to support you as you work to become more confident, skilled critical thinkers and writers.

First Short Paper (at least three pages):

Choose one of the following:

- 1) Discuss the nature of “the real” in one documentary film. How does “the real” get established? What modes/models of filmmaking (observational, participatory, poetic, expository, performative, reflexive, etc.) deepen (or complicate) the film’s verisimilitude as it unfolds? What gets left out? How is the position through which “the real” is established made visible or sublimated, and to what end?
- 2) Compare and contrast two films, one you deem propaganda and one you’d categorize as journalism. What definitive aesthetic strategies and technical elements support your critical assessments of each film? Discuss at least two filmmaking elements (characterization, sound design, cinematography/camera angles, editing, etc.) in each film.

Second Short Paper (at least three pages):

Write a paper that analyzes a particular film’s ethical concerns. If there are “two sides to every issue,” how does the film represent conflict or synthesis? Here are some prompts:

- What kind of narrative does the film use to establish the ethical choice?
- To what extent are ethical concerns resolved or complicated by voice-over or script? If there is no voice-over and/or script, how do other elements of the film (characterization, sound design, cinematography/camera angles, editing, etc.) calibrate the film’s ethical compass?
- How does the film balance varied points of view (intersections and departures) on its central themes?
- What, if any, “outside perspectives” or societal norms inform the ethical compass by which audiences are meant to judge the film? How does the film situate/present/interrogate its audiences’ (or various imagined spectators’) gaze or predispositions?
- How does the film use violence, objectionable language, or other disturbing content to emphasize conflict or compel a response from its audiences? Take care to clarify your POV on the ethical implications of the filmmakers’ choices. How does the film make sense of its depiction of violence within the film’s overall narrative?
- What is the cumulative effect of the aesthetic choices in your assessment of the film’s ethics?

Appendix, Grading Rubric

Research and Analysis Papers

Papers receiving the following grades will meet a preponderance of the following bullet points.

The Superior Paper (A/A-)

- | Contains a clear, well-constructed thesis.
- | Is well organized and well-written.
- | Provides substantial, relevant detail to support the thesis.
- | Addresses all components of the prompt.
- | Demonstrates thorough analysis and critical evidence in support of its arguments.
- | Correctly attributes and skillfully incorporates primary and secondary sources.

The Good Paper (B+/B)

- | Contains a thesis.
- | Contains generally clear organization and writing.
- | Provides relevant detail to support its thesis.
- | Addresses all components of the prompt.
- | Places the subject matter in its historical context.
- | Demonstrates some analysis of primary and secondary sources.
- | Effectively incorporates outside sources but has minor, though not distracting, errors of attribution.
- | May contain errors that do not seriously detract from the essay's efficacy.

The Borderline Paper (B-/C+)

- | Contains a thesis that is not fully developed.
- | Organization needs improvement but is generally understandable.
- | Provides limited detail to support its thesis.
- | Amorphously addresses some but not all components of the prompt.
- | Demonstrates knowledge of the subject matter without connection to the historical context.
- | Demonstrates little analysis of primary and secondary sources.
- | Uses sources of information that are irrelevant or lacking in scholarly authority.
- | Contains errors of attribution and grammar that detract from the essay's efficacy.

The "Needs Help" Paper (C/C-)

- | Presents a thesis that unclear, unwieldy, imprecise, or otherwise ineffective.
- | Is poorly organized and/or poorly written.
- | Uses generalities rather than evidence from primary and secondary sources.
- | Does not address the prompt with any perceptibility.
- | Demonstrates limited knowledge of the subject matter.
- | Demonstrates no analysis of primary and secondary sources that it uses.
- | Uses inadequate or irrelevant sources of information.
- | Contains errors of attribution and grammar that majorly undermine the essay's legibility.

The Unsatisfactory Paper (D/F)

- | Shows minimal effort and/or understanding of the assignment.
- | Has no thesis and is otherwise poorly organized and poorly written.
- | Contains little to no supporting details or analysis.
- | Uses no primary or secondary sources or uses them inappropriately or poorly.
- | Contains errors of attribution and grammar that make the essay's arguments illegible or unintelligible.