

In this more formal primary source paper, I am now interested in how you are coming to understand and analyze your documentary. You are to conduct “*close readings*” of two (2) related episodes from your documentary and analyze them in order to come to a thesis addressing how it deploys filmmaking techniques to craft an argument. By *analysis* I mean a detailed examination of elements and/or structure as a basis for discussion or interpretation. The goal of this assignment is to develop your skills for reading films and develop a unique claim based on evidence.

### Step One: Second Watch, Looking for Details

View your film for a second time but this time in segments, perhaps 45 minutes at a time over the course of a few days. Think about the skills you’ve learned thus far regarding cinematography, mise-en-scene, editing, and sound. How are the filmmakers crafting their story? What are they doing with their primary evidence? How are they orienting us, the viewers, toward the subject of their documentary? Take notes paying special attention to the filmmaking techniques.

- See pp. 441-7 in *The Film Experience* on how to annotate film – i.e., what things to look for.

### Step Two: Close Reading Episodes

Like your practical production assignment at the beginning of the semester, films are a compilation of episodes or scenes, and episodes are a compilation of shots. Select two small moments from your documentary that a) struck you as seeming essential to the argument of film or the way in which the film crafts an argument, and b) are related to one another in some way (that you can describe). You’ve read a lot about the influence of the film in popular culture already, so it may be useful to focus on two episodes that seem to have taken hold of reviewers or fans. You will then conduct a close reading of these two episodes and create an argument about them. A possible section outline for your paper:

- **Introductory Section:** What are the two episodes you decided on which to focus? Why did you choose them? What links they together formally as well as in the narrative of the film? Set the scene for your reader and then concluded with your thesis statement about what assessing the two episodes reveal about the larger film.
- **Paper Body:** Closely consider the details and composition of the two episodes in your film. For each discuss at least three (3) technical aspects of filmmaking, referring to significant details and strategies to cultivate a rhetorical effect. Ask yourself:
  - How do they suggest argument, or lack of one?
  - What are they trying to achieve? In terms of narrative? In terms of aesthetic effect?
- **Concluding Section:** In one or two paragraphs, compare and contrast the two episodes. When you look at them side-by-side outside of the film itself, what is the result? How is the film technique structuring our discovery process as viewers of the film? What experience is the filmmaker attempting to cultivate? Why might this be getting so much attention, based on the techniques? State and elaborate on your thesis statement to make an arguable claim about these two episodes and their significance for the film’s effect.

### Deadlines

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- By **October 16** give your documentary a second watch using the annotation techniques in *The Film Experience* pp. 441-7.
- By **October 24** post stills from the two clips (or even the clips if you can manage it) you’ve written about to your [Omeka](#) website as “items.” (Make sure to include the MLA bibliographic

## Omeka Exhibit: Analytical Essay

citation somewhere in the item entry.) Then create a “Collection” grouping together the items that support the analysis in your essay. It may be useful to include parts of your analysis in the description of the stills.

- ✦ By **October 25** submit your essay (3-4 pages) to [Compass](#) as well as bring a hard copy to submit in class. Make sure to include a Works Cited page following the MLA format (p. 561 in *The Film Experience*) and guidelines in the syllabus.

### Omeka Tips & Tricks

- Check out the how-to guide: <http://tinyurl.com/d22m3do>
- See the sample website: <http://tavaresengl104.omeka.net>

**Student Name:** [Sample Rubric]

**Final Grade:**

Criteria	Superior	Satisfactory	Adequate	Unsatisfactory	Unacceptable
1) A central and specific <i>arguable claim</i> , which is clearly articulated in the introduction, and sustained throughout the paper.					
2) Addresses all <i>assignment</i> components, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of two (2) episodes.</li> <li>• Links episodes selection to the larger cultural attention they've received.</li> <li>• Addresses three (3) technical aspects of each.</li> <li>• Corresponding online posts have been made to <i>Omeka</i>.</li> </ul>					
3) Sustains thoughtful <i>analysis</i> and effectively employs <i>evidence</i> .					
4) At the sentence level as well as a whole, the essay is clearly <i>organized</i> and follows a logical progression.					
5) <i>Format, mechanics</i> , and <i>proofreading</i> meet course standards, including a Works Cited page.					

**Comments:**