

8-7-2008

# Film in Composition: Developing Critical Thinking Skills Through the Study of Film in First-Year Composition

Beatriz Amaya-Anderson  
*Indiana University of Pennsylvania*

Follow this and additional works at: <http://knowledge.library.iup.edu/etd>

---

## Recommended Citation

Amaya-Anderson, Beatriz, "Film in Composition: Developing Critical Thinking Skills Through the Study of Film in First-Year Composition" (2008). *Theses and Dissertations (All)*. 725.  
<http://knowledge.library.iup.edu/etd/725>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by Knowledge Repository @ IUP. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations (All) by an authorized administrator of Knowledge Repository @ IUP. For more information, please contact [cclouser@iup.edu](mailto:cclouser@iup.edu), [sara.parme@iup.edu](mailto:sara.parme@iup.edu).

FILM IN COMPOSITION: DEVELOPING CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS  
THROUGH THE STUDY OF FILM IN FIRST-YEAR COMPOSITION

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Beatriz Amaya-Anderson

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

August 2008

© 2008 by Beatriz Amaya-Anderson

All Rights Reserved

Indiana University of Pennsylvania  
The School of Graduate Studies and Research  
Department of English

We hereby approve the dissertation of

Beatriz Amaya-Anderson

Candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

---

---

Bennett A. Rafoth, Ed.D.  
Professor of English, Advisor

---

---

Linda Norris, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor of English

---

---

Thomas J. Slater, Ph.D.  
Professor of English

ACCEPTED

---

Michele S. Schwietz, Ph.D.  
Assistant Dean for Research  
The School of Graduate Studies and Research

---

Title: Film in Composition: Developing Critical Thinking Skills Through the Study of Film in First-Year Composition

Author: Beatriz Amaya-Anderson

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Bennett Rafoth

Dissertation Committee Members: Dr. Linda Norris  
Dr. Thomas J. Slater

*Film in composition: Developing critical thinking skills through the study of film in first-year composition* presents an investigation of the application of film study in college writing instruction. The first two chapters argue for the inclusion of film in the teaching of writing; explore the cultural, social, and political relevance of film for the field of composition; and present a review of the theoretical and pedagogical applications of film study in secondary English and first-year writing courses. The third chapter presents a qualitative study completed from April 2006 to April 2007. It details the methodology of the research project, the data collection and analysis of nineteen teacher interviews, six classroom observations, and an assortment of artifacts (e.g., syllabi, course readings, film selections, writing prompts, student writing, student surveys). This data have been coded and organized into reports, appearing in the latter half of the dissertation. Chapters four and five present the cross-case analyses of two southern California community college writing classrooms. They examine the analytical frameworks (e.g., narrative-cultural and cinematic-rhetorical analyses) teachers implement to hone student critical thinking skills. The examination of analytical frameworks leads to the sixth chapter, which explores the implications of these teaching practices. This discussion closes the dissertation, providing final thoughts and arguments

for including film in composition as a way to improve intellectual skills that are necessary for a critical academic literacy.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people have contributed to the making of this dissertation, offering support of different kinds. I am indebted to the professors in the Composition and TESOL Program at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Drs. Donald McAndrew, Carole Bencich, Nancy Hayward, Claude Mark Hurlbert and others were instrumental in extending my studies in English. Prior to my work in the program, I was primarily a literature major. Their courses in qualitative research, composition theory, language and social context, literacy studies, and composition and literature broadened my understanding of the study and teaching of English.

I would also like to acknowledge my exceptional dissertation committee. I am grateful to Dr. Bennett Rafoth who guided me through this dissertation project. His words of encouragement and careful readings of my drafts were important to my research and writing process. I am also indebted to Dr. Linda Norris who pointed me to the important research being completed in the study of film, media literacy education, and English instruction. I will always remember the afternoon she generously offered to participate on my dissertation committee. I would also like to thank Dr. Thomas J. Slater who, in the summer of 2003, gave me an opportunity to complete an informal observation of his students in an introduction to film studies course. In retrospect, these observations served as a pre-pilot study for thinking about the application of film in developing student critical thinking and writing skills.

In addition to these figures, I also owe a special gratitude to all of the individuals who contributed to *Film in composition*. Without the help of the participants, there would not have been a study at all. I am appreciative of their time, effort, and commitment to this research project. In particular, I would like to thank the first-year writing teachers who participated as cases. Daron Henley, Dr. Grace Leigh, Clara Bautista, Dr. Madeline Bowman, Dr. Anne Bratton-Hayes, and Dr. Eric Fischer (you know who you are!) were generous to share their classroom practices with me and to do their part in helping me gain IRB Approval. I would also like to thank the students who volunteered to participate in the study. These students were kind to welcome me into the classroom, to complete student surveys, and to trust me with their writing. Their responses and papers were an important and exciting part of the research. They contributed another dimension to the study of film in composition.

I am extremely grateful for the confidence, patience, and support from the University of La Verne. In 2001, I became the recipient of the university's Minority Faculty Development Fellowship. Cathy Henley-Erickson and the Modern Languages Department nominated me for this program. Through the fellowship, I have been able to complete my graduate studies and continue my teaching experience. For this rare opportunity, I am most thankful.

Lastly, and most profoundly, I would like to recognize the loving support I have received from my family. Throughout my life, I have been fortunate to have a family who has believed in me and my goals. This support began when I was eight, when my parents Hector and Dinora Amaya decided to speak to me about a college education. I have never forgotten this conversation or the sincerity of their words: that I could achieve



anything as long as I believed in myself and worked hard. Throughout the years, they have made sacrifices to get me the best education they could afford. Their dedication and support is a testament of what wonderful parents they are and continue to be.

In addition to my parents, there are other family members who have also offered their own kind support. My brother, Hector Gerardo Amaya, has been especially sympathetic to my endeavors. His was the voice I craved when I needed to laugh about my own awkward experiences as a student and researcher. Many a late afternoon, I have delighted in our phone conversations – particularly, in his sense of humor. Also important were my children. Throughout my graduate studies, Ashley, Emily, and Ethan have kept me grounded. They impressed me with their youthful wisdom: to take time for the simple pleasures in life. My faithful dissertation companions, my dogs, were also important in the latter regard. It is often said that writing a dissertation is a lonely and isolating process, but I had three steadfast companions: Snow the Maltese, Max the Golden Retriever, and Sally Sue the Schnauzer. They were the first to comfort me in my frustration and the first to celebrate my progress with song and dance.

Most of all, I would like to recognize the loving support I have received from my husband Brian Erik Anderson. Since 1993, Brian has been, first and foremost, my friend. He encouraged me to return to graduate school and endured three summers (and more) to support me through IUP's rigorous program. I am absolutely grateful for his friendship. For his kind and generous indulgence, I lovingly dedicate this dissertation to him.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

| Chapter | Page                                                                                   |
|---------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| One     | INTRODUCTION TO <i>FILM IN COMPOSITION</i> ..... 1                                     |
|         | In Focus: Taking a Broad Approach to <i>Film</i> ..... 1                               |
|         | From Social Practice to Academic Discourse: The Pedagogical<br>Appeal of Film ..... 5  |
|         | Contribution to Composition Studies ..... 10                                           |
|         | Broadening Conceptions of Literacy ..... 14                                            |
|         | The Significance of <i>Film in Composition</i> ..... 21                                |
|         | Conclusion ..... 24                                                                    |
| Two     | <i>FILM IN COMPOSITION: A LITERATURE REVIEW</i> ..... 26                               |
|         | Introduction ..... 26                                                                  |
|         | Applications of Film Study in Secondary English and<br>First-Year Composition ..... 28 |
|         | Narrative Analysis ..... 31                                                            |
|         | Cultural Analysis ..... 36                                                             |
|         | Cinematic Analysis ..... 43                                                            |
|         | Rhetorical Analysis ..... 49                                                           |
|         | Conclusion ..... 55                                                                    |
| Three   | <i>FILM IN COMPOSITION: METHODOLOGY</i> ..... 57                                       |
|         | Introduction ..... 57                                                                  |
|         | Research Questions ..... 58                                                            |
|         | Methods of Data Collection ..... 62                                                    |
|         | Teacher Interviews ..... 62                                                            |
|         | Classroom Observations ..... 68                                                        |
|         | Case #1: Clara Bautista ..... 71                                                       |
|         | Case #2: Dr. Madeline Bowman ..... 73                                                  |
|         | Case #3: Dr. Anne Bratton-Hayes ..... 76                                               |
|         | Case #4: Dr. Eric Fischer ..... 78                                                     |
|         | Artifacts ..... 82                                                                     |
|         | Course Documents ..... 83                                                              |
|         | Student Writing ..... 84                                                               |
|         | Student Surveys ..... 90                                                               |
|         | Methods of Data Analysis ..... 93                                                      |
|         | The Reports ..... 94                                                                   |
|         | Validity ..... 98                                                                      |
|         | Time Frame ..... 99                                                                    |
|         | Final Comments ..... 100                                                               |

|      |                                                                                                   |     |
|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Four | FILM AS CONTENT: A NARRATIVE-CULTURAL ANALYSIS OF FILM IN FIRST-YEAR COMPOSITION .....            | 102 |
|      | Introduction.....                                                                                 | 102 |
|      | A Word on Methodology and the Participants.....                                                   | 103 |
|      | Film as Content: Two Case Studies.....                                                            | 105 |
|      | Film Selections .....                                                                             | 115 |
|      | Critical Viewing .....                                                                            | 118 |
|      | Cultural and Critical Readings.....                                                               | 119 |
|      | Literary Works.....                                                                               | 122 |
|      | The Elements of Narrative-Cultural Analysis .....                                                 | 125 |
|      | Classroom Dialogues .....                                                                         | 130 |
|      | Writing Prompts .....                                                                             | 143 |
|      | Student Papers .....                                                                              | 147 |
|      | Conclusions.....                                                                                  | 159 |
| Five | FILM GENRE IN COMPOSITION: A CINEMATIC-RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF FILM IN FIRST-YEAR COMPOSITION..... | 161 |
|      | Introduction.....                                                                                 | 161 |
|      | A Word on Methodology and the Participants.....                                                   | 162 |
|      | Film Genre in Composition: Two Case Studies.....                                                  | 164 |
|      | Film Selections .....                                                                             | 171 |
|      | Critical Viewing .....                                                                            | 175 |
|      | The Codes and Conventions of Film Genre .....                                                     | 175 |
|      | Film Rhetoric.....                                                                                | 180 |
|      | Course Readings .....                                                                             | 185 |
|      | Classroom Dialogues .....                                                                         | 189 |
|      | Writing Prompts .....                                                                             | 205 |
|      | Student Papers .....                                                                              | 209 |
|      | Conclusions.....                                                                                  | 222 |
| Six  | THE IMPLICATIONS IN FOCUS: THE IMPACT OF FILM STUDY IN FIRST -YEAR COMPOSITION.....               | 225 |
|      | Introduction.....                                                                                 | 225 |
|      | A Word on Methodology and the Participants.....                                                   | 226 |
|      | The Implications in Focus.....                                                                    | 228 |
|      | Implication #1: <i>Film in Composition</i> Transforms Teaching and Learning Practices.....        | 230 |
|      | Implication #2: <i>Film in Composition</i> Reinforces the Goals of Writing Instruction .....      | 235 |
|      | Implication #3: <i>Film in Composition</i> Expands the Concept of Literacy .....                  | 242 |

|                                                                              |     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Concluding Thoughts .....                                                    | 250 |
| REFERENCES.....                                                              | 255 |
| APPENDICES .....                                                             | 275 |
| Appendix A - Letters of Introduction .....                                   | 275 |
| Appendix B - Consent Forms.....                                              | 279 |
| Teacher Informed Consent .....                                               | 279 |
| Student Informed Consent.....                                                | 281 |
| Case Report Consent Form .....                                               | 283 |
| Appendix C - Interview Questions .....                                       | 284 |
| Appendix D - Film in Composition: The Participants.....                      | 288 |
| Appendix E - Student Survey Questions .....                                  | 294 |
| Appendix F - Case #1 - Student Surveys .....                                 | 296 |
| Appendix G - Case #2 - Student Surveys .....                                 | 303 |
| Appendix H - Case #3 - Student Surveys .....                                 | 306 |
| Appendix I - Case #4 - Student Surveys.....                                  | 316 |
| Appendix J - A Narrative-Cultural Analysis of Film: The Participants .....   | 324 |
| Appendix K - A Cinematic-Rhetorical Analysis of Film: The Participants ..... | 328 |

## LIST OF TABLES

| Table                                                             | Page |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 1 Participant Analysis .....                                      | 65   |
| 2 An Overview of the Cases.....                                   | 81   |
| 3 An Overview of Student Writing.....                             | 86   |
| 4 Research Questions and Sources of Data.....                     | 92   |
| 5 Film as Content: An Overview of the Participants.....           | 108  |
| 6 Film Genre in Composition: An Overview of the Participants..... | 166  |
| 7 On Student Enrollment, Motivation, and Participation .....      | 233  |
| 8 Integrating Film into Composition .....                         | 237  |
| 9 Emerging Literacies: Student Awareness of Texts.....            | 247  |

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION TO *FILM IN COMPOSITION*

The following dissertation presents an investigation of film in college composition. The first two chapters argue for the inclusion of film in the teaching of writing; explore the cultural, social, and political relevance of film for the field of composition; and present a review of the theoretical and pedagogical applications of film study in secondary English and first-year writing courses. The third chapter presents a qualitative study completed from April 2006 to April 2007. It details the methodology of the research project, the data collection and analysis of nineteen teacher interviews, six classroom observations, and an assortment of artifacts (e.g., syllabi, course readings, film selections, writing prompts, student writing, student surveys). This data have been coded and organized into reports, appearing in the latter half of the dissertation. Chapters four and five present the cross-case analyses of two southern California community college writing classrooms. They examine the analytical frameworks (e.g., narrative-cultural and cinematic-rhetorical analyses) teachers implement to hone student critical thinking skills. The examination of analytical frameworks leads to the sixth chapter, which explores the implications of these teaching practices. This discussion closes the dissertation, providing final thoughts and arguments for including film in composition as a way to improve intellectual skills that are necessary for a critical academic literacy.

#### In Focus: Taking a Broad Approach to *Film*

As a point of entry, I begin this dissertation with a critical look at the word *film*. In writing instruction, film is a pedagogical tool with a wide range of theoretical and practical applications. Composition scholarship and research commonly identifies film

as a form of communication, a kind of language that produces meaning through separate technologies and discourses of the camera, lighting, editing, sound, and mise-en-scene. The latter signifying systems work together to present an aural-visual narrative and to communicate social, cultural, and political values. In the writing classroom, both dimensions are significant to understanding film as a text as well as cultural product of an industry and of the culture itself. For some composition and English teachers, film (and other media) can help begin a process of inquiry on the construction of representation and its representation of realities (Berlin, 1996). Students ‘read’ and/or produce film to understand how different media communicate; they critique film arguments using literary and critical cultural frameworks; they begin to recognize that meaning is constructed based on film codes and conventions as well as the social-cultural backgrounds of its ‘readers’ (George & Trimbur, 2001, p. 77). This approach to film study is not a particularly new concept. Film has long been an academic interest in literature and in cultural studies. Elements of each discipline’s critical frameworks including film studies have become, in some organized way, a part of first-year-college-composition courses.

In recent years, the word *film* has also come to mean the multiple formats in which the medium is available. Certainly, there are differences in the images projected in a movie theater from those screened on a television set through a videocassette recorder (VCR) or a digital video disc player (DVD) on a computer monitor, but how these technologies register on the retina is not the subject of this dissertation. Because film is available in multiple formats, I also consider distribution technologies under the definition of *film*. Since the mid-eighties and early nineties, the film industry has extended its reach through pervasive distribution technologies. The advancements of the

VCR, the DVD player, and other kindred technologies have ushered a home theater revolution (Costanzo, 2004, pp. xv-xvi). The VCR was the first technology to change the status of film as a readable text (Gallagher, 1988). Since then, subsequent film technologies have imparted more control of the film experience to the viewer, providing the comfort of multiple at-home, film viewings in addition to new remote control features that pause and forward or reverse action at faster or slower speeds. Today, watching films in a movie theater exists alongside watching movies in multiple formats at home and in the classroom. More often, it is the latter distribution technologies that are included and integrated into first-year-composition courses for critical viewing, writing assignments, and hands-on film production experience. These advancing technologies press English teachers to broaden the scope of the word *film*. For the purposes of this study, I have done the same.

Not coincidentally, the inclusion of these distribution technologies under the definition of the word *film* promises an extensive viewing library for the writing classroom. Narrative films, experimental films, modernist art films, propaganda films, and documentaries are several genres teachers have available as classroom resources. For this study, however, the word *film* refers to narrative films, which I have opted to classify as feature films, short films, and film clips (from feature films). The narrative film is a familiar movie kind that is frequently integrated into first-year composition.

I recognize that my conception of the word *film* is wide-ranging in scope. My intention, however, is to accommodate the applications of my participants, looking at the film genres and forms they commonly use. I have no doubt that successful film-writing pedagogy is being practiced using theoretical frameworks and film genres not mentioned



here. All research entails a degree of selection, however, and I have adjusted the focus of this dissertation based on extensive reading on the topic and the participants I have contacted. For the sake of this study, I look at film in first-year-composition courses that adopt a cultural studies-popular culture perspective. These writing pedagogies focus on ideological content and representation as well as information on the production-and-consumption cycle, new historicism, and film discourse. The study intends to explain how teachers introduce and students discuss this content. It furthermore aims to examine how teachers present film's rhetorical devices and how these are similar to and different from written discourse. Without a doubt, this discussion on pedagogy is important to understanding how the study of film is incorporated into the writing classroom.

On a final note, I would like to clarify my use of the word *film*. I acknowledge the fact that there are differentiations between this word and the terms *movies* and *cinema*. According to James Monaco, French theorists and film scholars believe the word *film* suggests a relation to the world around it (2000, p. 228). In my mind, however, it also connotes a form of art alongside painting, sculpture, and photography. In this way, the word can be linked to the term *cinema*, the aesthetic elements that define the art itself. Another term, *movies*, is a label used to understand film as an economic commodity, a mass-produced cultural artifact. *Film's* connection to these terms cannot be separated. They represent different aspects of this aural-visual medium (paraphrase, Monaco, p. 228). For the purpose of this dissertation, I use these words interchangeably.

## From Social Practice to Academic Discourse:

### The Pedagogical Appeal of Film

In the twentieth century, film is the most recent art form standing alongside literature, theater, painting, music, and photography (Monaco). Apart from its status as art, film is also the most popular medium in popular culture (Vetrie, 2004). It is a cultural phenomenon – the one medium that everyone attends to, that holds the potential of becoming an *event*, raising questions and dialogue on cultural and political issues (Bishop, 1999b; Giroux, 2002; Vandervelde, 2004). As part of the entertainment industry, film was the second largest export in this country in 2002. Much of this industry is controlled by a handful of "corporations that exercise enormous power in all major facets of movie making – production, distribution, and circulation in the United States and abroad" (Giroux, 2002, p. 11). According to the Motion Picture Association (MPA), American films are distributed to more than 150 countries worldwide and provide the majority of prerecorded materials (e.g., DVDs and videocassettes) seen in millions of homes throughout the world (paraphrase, *2006 US Movie Attendance Study*). As this information indicates, film is pervasive, especially through its distribution technologies. The movies have an integral part in public and private lives. They are released on videocassettes and DVDs, are broadcast on television and cable/satellite television, and are available on the Internet. In the last twenty years, older film technologies have yielded to newer ones. They have changed the way people consume films. Today, films are more like books, affordable and easy to purchase, rent, and download (Monaco, p. 13). Because of recent technological advances, the integration of film in education is much easier to accomplish. The shift to newer technologies holds

much promise for the cultural-studies-based writing course, where these advancements are informing composition pedagogy. They support current thinking in composition, the push toward innovation and revised perspectives on learning and knowledge.

It is not far-fetched to say that film is a unique medium that stands apart from other media. Television, radio, newspapers, and other electronic media have their own codes and conventions that allow audiences to interact differently with this kind of media. It is not uncommon for this media to serve secondary and even tertiary purposes. In most households, people half listen to a morning television or radio program for news accounts or for information regarding the weather while talking and preparing for work. This example is a testament that people have learned to accomplish more than one activity at a time. It more importantly demonstrates the manner in which this ‘backdrop media’ have integrated themselves seamlessly into daily routines. It should come as no surprise that backdrop media contributes to hours of media consumption throughout the day (Masterman, 1985, p. 3). Its format assumes that viewers are just tuning in to the program and quickly reviews narrative and informational ground covered from an earlier segment of the program. This narrative or information review is also accompanied by commercials and advertisements, which in a sense interrupt the flow of the featured program but are an important part of the program’s textuality. When these advertisements are engaged in, they influence the overall presentation of a program line up and reflect commercial interest. When these ads are ignored, they allow people to ‘tune out’ this media, interrupting a viewer’s or listener’s level of engagement. In this way, television, radio, newspapers, and other electronic media is “a kind of distracted media” (Giroux, 2002, p. 8) that allows people to carry on with their everyday lives with

the constant murmur of talk show conversation or the hum of music playing in the background.

Unlike backdrop media, film demands a certain level of engagement for its particular narratives, subject positions, and ideologies to develop. In a ninety-minute to two-hour format, film offers “a deeper pedagogical register” than “a three-minute pop song or a twenty-two minute sitcom” (Giroux, 2002, pp. 7-8). Its textuality requires viewers to enter the world of character, setting, and sociopolitical themes. It is also linear, forever in the present tense, moving forward, its narrative in a state of becoming (Colebrook, 2002). Film is more holistic and less fragmentary than other media. It does not offer clear or obvious points of entry like television, radio, or computer technologies and, therefore, requires viewers to invest themselves in its narrative. Like other visual media, film's textuality is one of image and sound, using similar signifying systems to communicate. This other media, however, do not incorporate these elements to the extent that film does as a part of their discourse (Barnes, 1976; Bruder, 1994; Considine & Haley, 1999a, p. 31-a; Fehlman, 1994; Giroux, 2002; Golden, 2001, p. 5, 9, 16; Krueger & Christel, 2001; Semali, 2000, p. 6; Shoos, George & Comprone, 1993, p. 460; Turner, 1999). In watching a movie, the viewing process is informed by a wider spectrum of cinematic discourse (e.g., camera angles, editing techniques, cinematography, and lighting). In this way, film has a larger vocabulary, if you will, that cues and constrains viewer response (Fehlman, 1994, p. 39b). This point on film's textuality makes film unique in its form, style, and conventions.

Apart from its formal or aesthetic properties, film is also a social practice in which audiences of all ages participate. Adolescents and young adults most often

patronize theater movie going. In 2006, the Motion Picture Association (MPA) estimates that about thirty-seven percent of frequent (i.e., at least once per month) and occasional (i.e., at least once in six months) moviegoers were ages twelve to twenty-four (*2006 US Movie Attendance Study*, p. 4). This percentage is considerably large and supports the argument that film is the audiovisual literature of a younger generation ("Open the windows," 2004, p. 9). This audience is, in fact, no stranger to film and its distribution technologies. In fact, in the last twenty years there are far more opportunities to interact with this medium. Today's twenty-year olds are the first to be raised on videocassettes and cable television and the first to experience film in the theaters and at home with some degree of frequency and with a variety of film choices available for rental and/or purchase.

In this way, film is for the younger generation a more familiar text than reading print – its added appeal being that watching a movie is seemingly easier to 'read.' Yet the act of seeing, of looking is not a passive activity (Berger, 1972; Foreman & Shumway, 1992). It is a highly interpretative act. Narrative films seem easier to read because they speak laterally "rather than down to [its] audiences" (Masterman, p. 30). This is not to say that film does not have the capacity to 'speak down' to its audience but that, generally speaking, its intent is to communicate to a wide audience. It draws on cultural myths, icons, and symbolism to communicate ideas and arguments quickly. A film adaptation of a novel takes less time than reading the novel itself. This point may explain, in part, the appeal of film not only to younger audiences but also to college writing practitioners who wish to supplement readings in their courses or use film narratives in place of the novels due to issues of time.

Because film is a unique social practice that adolescents and young adults enjoy, practitioners include film study in their writing courses. Teachers do not underestimate the pleasures found in watching, understanding, and analyzing films. For younger audiences (and other viewers), film has a pedagogical role outside of the classroom. Although it may not be the intent of the filmmaker to teach audiences anything, young people extract lessons from narrative films and, in some cases, they learn more from these films than they do from books (paraphrase, hooks, 1996, p. 2; see also Giroux, 2002). While this information alarms many English teachers, perhaps film should be reconsidered as an opportunity for learning. Film may offer entertainment, escape, and pleasure, but these affective responses should not prevent teachers from including film in their writing courses. Instead, practitioners and students can explore the nature of these responses – specifically looking at what they have to say about culture and their own subject positions as viewers (Heyda, 1999). In this case, film is not the end but the beginning of inquiry, dialogue, and writing. Film study in the writing classroom provides an excellent opportunity to introduce students to alternate points of view, to different perspectives raised by the film text itself, and to the multiple voices that make up the classroom. In this way, film presents a lived experience that students engage in to understand their lives and the world.

Practitioners who include film in college composition honor a distinct social practice. For most people, film is a positive experience that initiates dialogue, critique, and solidarity. It fosters thought and the pleasures of forming and making meaning. In taking this approach, teachers bring a social practice into the classroom as a way to work toward writing-course goals. Learning is socially constructed. When teachers work

within the students' "zone of proximal development" (Vygotsky, 1986, pp. 186-187), they bridge the gap between what students know and what students need to learn and practice. In this way, film serves as a pedagogical space where student knowledge meets school knowledge. This perspective also recognizes students as thinkers with prior knowledge and experience. It understands that learning is a scaffolding process, where previous knowledge and experience is used to build intellectual skills (Allender, 2004; Holbrook, 1987; Hunt & Hunt, 2004; Penrod, 1997b). Stanley Aronowitz speaks highly of this teaching approach, stating that "beginning from student experience, validating what students already know, is just good pedagogy that can influence the process of language acquisition, written expression, in short, the learnings that are currently grouped under the rubric of literacy" (Giroux et al., 1989, pp. 216-217). Film can develop the literacy skills that students practice in the composition classroom. Because film is a medium with which they are familiar, students acquire analytical discourses and intellectual skills through personal knowledge and experience. These discourses and skills are practiced on the film text before and after turning to the written text. This kind of learning serves two pedagogical desires – to make learning an enjoyable experience and to meet coursework goals (Giroux, 2002; Turner, 1999; Wood, 1998).

### Contribution to Composition Studies

As the discussion above suggests, the study of film in first-year-college-writing courses is situated within the broad framework of cultural studies-composition pedagogy. A cultural-studies-based writing course encourages the study of culture and its various modes of communication. As an alternate text to the written word, film is at once a form

of communication and a cultural artifact used for textual and rhetorical analyses (Berlin, 1996) and for promoting dialogue and critique (e.g., self-critique, cultural critique, production critique) (France, 1993; Fitts & France, 1995; Harris, 1999; Schilb, 1991; McComiskey, 1997). It is also central for improving the critical thinking skills necessary for achieving academic literacy, a set of institutional discourses that signals a student's entrance into the academic community (Bartholmae, 1985/1997). This kind of literacy indicates an awareness that writing is a public form of communication, that it contributes to a public discussion that has a wider audience than writing for the members of the classroom.

Because film helps move students from private knowledge and experience to alternate viewpoints and public discourse, it is a favorable medium for the writing classroom. Film works from a private "shared experience, a common starting point from which diverse audiences can dialogue about [...] charged issues" (hooks, 1996, p. 2). These issues present students to public concerns on the representation of class, race, gender, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, and more. Movies provide a narrative for these discourses that are central to cultural studies and popular culture. Writing about these issues in composition courses prepares students who might otherwise be indifferent or reticent to delve into a discussion on cultural politics. Generally, students are motivated to engage themselves in public discussion when film study is included in the classroom (hooks 1996; Schmertz, 2001). For some practitioners, film is the public pedagogy that begins cultivating a public voice, mobilizing students to dialogue about culture, power, and politics (Berlin, 1996; Giroux, 2002, p. 12; hooks, 1996; Schmertz, 2001). This participation can eventually lead to academic literacy.



In a cultural-studies-based writing course, academic literacy calls for critical thinking skills to unpack the politics of filmic representation. Knowing how to ‘read’ film’s signifying systems can help students understand how its rhetoric (i.e., film discourse and its codes and conventions of genre) work to create meaning and guide the viewer’s response. While students may question the constructed representations of realities in the movies, they also need to develop critical methodologies for understanding this familiar text. In essence, film is “a naturalized text” for these viewers because it is a familiar text (Harris, 1999; Maloney & Miller, 1999). A cultural-studies framework applying film discourse, semiology, and rhetoric makes visible the manner in which film endorses certain ideological positions. As mentioned earlier, the interpretative processes involved in watching a film are quick, but they are quite complex and not so easily resolved. A popular culture form like film performs a “double action,” simultaneously “enforc[ing] and undermin[ing] social norms” (Dombeck & Herndon, 2004, p. 108). The combination of word, image, sound, and cinematic technique can sometimes send contradictory messages to viewers (Berlin, 1996; Penrod, 1997a). hooks, and later Penrod (1997a), state that these “mingling standpoints” make it difficult for students “to critically ‘read’ [an] overall filmic narrative” (1996, p. 3). Sometimes, these ambiguities are resolved for students in ‘palatable’ ways that are acceptable to the world in which they live. This information demonstrates that film is a complex viewing process that presents difficulties for readers. Teaching film’s signifying systems can begin denaturalizing the text so that students can read and write about it more critically. This framework can help students move from apprehending the text to comprehending its complexities.

The latter point raises a strong argument for including film in college composition. A film-writing pedagogy can provide a framework for textual analysis but can also pave the way to understanding how film works as a rhetorical text that positions student responses to favor certain ideologies and to shape social identities. Again, while students may be aware that film is a constructed text, they do not realize that their affective responses to the movies are also constructed and ideological (Considine & Haley, 1999a-d; Dombeck & Herndon, 2004; Maloney & Miller, 1999; Schmertz, 2001; Worsnop, 1999; Wood, 1998). Film in college composition challenges students to move beyond 'relating to' characters and conflict. Student recognition of this influence can be the starting point for understanding how personal experience and knowledge are couched in social values and beliefs as well as individual thoughts and preferences. In this way, students become critical readers and writers of culture and of their own experience, knowledge, and ideologies. While taking pleasure in motion pictures (being seduced by the moving image and sound), they can also analyze these pleasures and subjectivities, learning how they are at once acted upon and are acting on film (Trimbur, 1993). Here, a privatized pleasure becomes a way toward public discourse, dialogue, and self-discovery.

In summary, writing instruction that includes film from a cultural-studies approach makes students aware of its textuality, how it communicates and how it is similar to and different from written discourse. This framework offers a pedagogical space where students are introduced to school knowledge and experience and can begin to build critical thinking skills that are important to their success as members of the academic community and later of the public community. In essence, this viewing framework presses students to develop a set of academic discourses for a social practice.

When students engage in film in the writing classroom, they can begin to understand, dialogue, analyze, and evaluate film in new ways. They learn how they interact with this important global medium, how it differs from or is similar to other responses from groups and individuals (Fehlman, 1994).

In *Teaching the media*, Len Masterman cites Roland Barthes' belief that in order "to be a critic one also needs to be a fan" (p. 224). For media literacy scholars David Considine and Gail Haley, "The idea that the purpose of schools is to provide pleasure for students might strike some people as odd, silly, or inappropriate. However, the concept of pleasure, whether we call it appreciation or aesthetics, has always been in our schools, along with loftier goals of creating responsible citizens and productive workers" (1999a, p. 26a). Both points are critical for teachers to understand about teaching practices and learning philosophies. Film can serve two purposes in college composition. It can motivate critical response (e.g., writing and reading) to films and can begin the application of this skill to written discourse. This is one teaching objective of film in composition. When critical thinking skills are developed, it is the starting point for the development of academic literacy, a subject that will be discussed further in the next chapter.

### Broadening Conceptions of Literacy

*Film in composition* is a significant and timely dissertation topic in reflecting changing notions of literacy. For centuries, the term *literacy* has been understood as reading and writing in print and yet, in light of today's media-centered culture, this understanding may be too narrow. Today, advancing and developing technologies are

creating new methods of public communication, opening new possibilities never before thought possible (e.g., ‘virtual’ Web site and videoconference participation, satellite communication, video streaming technology, etc.). The children of today grow up with computers, the Internet, multimedia software, cable/satellite television, DVDs/VCRs, videogames, and other electronic gadgetry. As noted by these developments, literacy can no longer be defined in its classic terms. The new technologies reflect a literacy that is moving beyond the printed word and mark a shift toward the visual (e.g., the hybrid text and visual design) (Gallagher, 1988; George, 2002; Yancey, 2004).

Of course, these changes have far-reaching implications for education, especially for English and composition. The ubiquitousness of film and other visual media is a reason for rethinking conceptions of literacy, the text, the canon, and writing. Though visual media are now being used in the classroom, there still exists a high level of investment in writing and reading in their classic sense (Kress, 2003b, p. 10; Messaris, 1994, p. 21). For centuries, written language has been the means to power and the means to regulate access to power in western societies (Kress, 1999, p. 70). The belief that writing should remain the preferred mode of communication in academia and in society should then come as no surprise. The effort to maintain traditional notions of literacy is integral to social, cultural, and political ideologies, values, beliefs, and assumptions (Street, 2001; Trimbur, 1988). To an extent, this perspective has been influential enough to create a language-image hierarchy, in which language has been assigned the primary mode of communication in education and the image has been relegated to a recreational status – a pastime best kept out of school.

Of course, what is at stake here, especially for those in English and composition, is the power of the written word. To embrace broader understandings of literacy signals a change in disciplinary boundaries, teaching philosophies, and theoretical perspectives. In English studies, the written text – particularly, a canon of literature – has been the staple of a degree in literary studies and the primary sources for reading-and-writing assignments in composition. Even though film studies is housed in English departments at many colleges and universities, the move toward the study of film (and other visual media) in college writing not only breaks with the discipline's educational tradition for the past century but also raises concerns regarding disciplinary boundaries. Changing disciplinary focus is not necessarily a move practitioners want to do but are pressed to do for fear of becoming unessential to the academic community. With it comes the harsh reality of deciding what is and what is not essential to English instruction. Without a doubt, these are difficult choices to make, and yet they must be made so that English studies remains culturally and socially relevant (Kress, 1999, p. 67).

For composition studies, broadening the scope of literacy and the concept of text has been met with mixed responses. In one sense, the inclusion of film in writing instruction threatens to push the act of writing to the margins. It insinuates that writing instruction lacks content and that film study by way of a cultural studies approach will not only reinvigorate composition but also bring content to the classroom. Paradoxically, applications of film study in college writing are also met with considerable pressure from those outside the discipline who believe that it is free and easy pedagogy, lacking in academic rigor and, thereby, a disservice to students (as discussed in Masterman, 1985, p. 34). For this group of proponents, the students of today (and tomorrow) need traditional

courses in writing (and reading) in order to be successful in their college careers and to become participants of the socio-political community (Siegal, 1999). Once again, these conflicting attitudes should come as no surprise. They question the purpose and content of the first-year-writing course and, by extension, the purpose of literacy (i.e., literacy for individual development or for economic advantage), a much larger topic falling outside the parameters of this study.

Advocates who recognize film as viable text for writing instruction are generally of the opinion that literacy is not fixed to reading and writing the printed word. Rather, they believe literacy is applicable to all times, situations, and places (Street, 2001; Trimbur, 1988). They see academic literacy as related to other kinds of literacies developing at home, with friends, on the playground, and in the movie theater (Semali, 2000, p. 15, 19). Literacy is a process that is not unique to the classroom and that needs continuous honing even at higher levels of education ("Adolescent literacy," 2004). Like the former group, these practitioners are also concerned with writing (and reading) abilities, but they believe that literacy is having the competence in communicating and comprehending through traditional and emerging technologies of communication (Semali, p. 3; see also Berlin, 1996). Their questions of learning and knowledge have been recast in light of new technologies and in the effort to include visual media like film in the classroom. More importantly, it has been re-contextualized in terms of student knowledge and experience, supporting a constructivist view of the learning process.

The emergence of visual technologies in the classroom has raised the need to understand aural-visual technologies and their impact. One way it has been understood is by applying structuralist theories of popular culture, specifically semiotics. When written

language is one possible form of communication that produces meaning, it is situated within a wide range of semiotic modalities. The meaning of the word *text* becomes larger in scope. In semiology, the text assumes a variety of modes: TV programs, music, videogames, advertising, web sites, fashion, and more. In the message of the screen, written language is not the only vehicle for conveying information but is usually one part of many other languages (e.g., music, color, image, speech) contributing to the overall meaning. Visual media like newspapers, magazines, and the Internet present readers with less print reading and more image reading. Here, written language adopts the elements of visual representation, following the arrangement of visual-spatial display (Kress, 1999, p. 68, 81).

This technology has cognitive consequences. In “‘English’ at the crossroads” (1999), Gunther Kress discusses how the multi-semiotic text alters the reading path of its readers. As an example, he presents two American textbooks, one from the 1930s and the other from the 1980s, and demonstrates that language and image can be read but that today they communicate differently. In the 1930s text, the logic of its writing has a temporal-sequential organization. Its written language follows a sequence (i.e., one word after another) in a coherent order (e.g., with the subject before the verb and events following a salient arrangement) to make sense to the reader. The writing of the 1930s text implies that all its meaning is carried and can be found in its written words. Images that accompany the written text do just that – they accompany the written word and follow the logic of writing serving as illustrations.

In the 1980s textbook, however, the presentation of language and image are reversed. Writing does not dominate the page but shares its space with several images.

In this text, written language follows a spatial-simultaneous arrangement, where the presence of a number of elements on the page does not communicate in a specific order. The elements communicate meaning through their size and placement on the page. Here, writing follows the logic of the image, assuming characteristics of display and arrangement. Unlike the 1930s textbook, the written language of the 1980s textbook does not merely accompany the images but communicates different information. As shown by this example, the form and function of writing have cognitive implications that influence literacy.

Kress's discussion of the 1930s and 1980s textbooks also has social meaning for readers. The written language in the 1930s textbook has longer sentences that are complex and subordinated. The language is depersonalized and formal with its use of passive construction to maintain the objectivity and authority of its writer. Language use here implies distance and establishes the social relations between the reader and the writer. In the 1980s textbook, the written language is quite different. It follows the logic of speech, which is similar to the logic of writing in its dependence on temporal-sequential organization, yet the written language is syntactically and semantically simpler. The writer's voice is informal and personal, thereby lessening the distance between the reader and writer. Here, language use presents social relations that are equal (Kress, 1999).

Kress believes that the writing in the 1980s textbook also carries the social misconception that it is less complex than the 1930s example because of its language use and the number of images on the page. This assumption could not be farther from the truth. According to Kress, "abstraction and generalization are not absent from [the 1980s



text], and the cognitive demand made of the reader/viewer is as great (though different in character) as in the abstractions made in verbal language” (p. 76). He continues that the images also require the reader to constantly switch “from abstract to realist forms of representation” (p. 76). In the end, Kress argues that language and image both communicate ideas but not in the same way. Each carries a different functional load to the overall message of the 1980s textbook. The interactions between language and image do have cognitive consequences that influence communication.

Given this discussion, the study of film in college composition demands further consideration. It is difficult to say how advocates of film study in writing courses should proceed when there remains a distrust in the world mediated on the visual space of the screen. After all, opponents are coming to terms with a long line of western philosophy (e.g., Plato, Descartes, and Leibniz) that influenced education, creating a language-image hierarchy (Arnheim, 1980, p. 171). However, new literacies require educators – in particular, English and composition teachers – to develop new theories and pedagogies. Advancing and emerging technologies raise questions regarding classroom practices, learning philosophies, and theoretical frameworks. Film and other media can facilitate student learning and should not translate into lowering academic standards. Its inclusion should be considered an effort to make writing instruction meaningful to and for students. This time of expanding literacies calls for pedagogical innovation and changes in the content of the first-year-writing course (Berlin, 1996; Hobbs, 1998; Rose, 1990a-b; Thoman et al., 2003; Yancey, 2004).

Writing teachers who embrace current theoretical understandings of literacy also believe in the importance of preparing students for the world. The truth of the matter is

that, for the past three centuries, our world has become a quickly changing, technological society – one that has been awed by the photograph and later by the moving image, has seen the advent of television, has enjoyed the comfort of video and digital technologies, and has been transformed by the personal computer. To ignore the impact of these changes, how it has shaped our personal and public lives, would be problematic. The study of film in college composition broadens perspectives of the terms *literacy* and *text*. It presents a learning opportunity for both teachers and students and carries the potential for understanding how language and image interact and function in communicating ideas. In short, it changes our understanding of what it means to be a literate writer (and reader) in the twenty-first century.

### The Significance of *Film in Composition*

With the previous discussion in mind, the dissertation study proposed here contributes to an on-going conversation on film in first-year composition. Research on film in composition is necessary. This dissertation endeavors to provide more information on the study of film as it applies to first-year composition. It contributes to existing research, documenting the classroom practices of two-year college professors and instructors who include film study in writing instruction. The purpose of the study is to answer questions of theory and practice:

- *What is the theoretical rationale for including film in first-year writing instruction?*
- *What critical frameworks do practitioners apply to hone critical thinking skills that are essential for academic literacy?*
- *What are the implications of incorporating an aural-visual medium like film into the writing classroom?*

For interested readers and practitioners, these research questions attempt to identify the broad theoretical approaches used to incorporate film into the writing classroom; the concepts and terms needed to read, interpret, and analyze film; and the consequences of including film in first-year composition.

Film is not new to the writing classroom. Its earliest practice dates back to 1913 (Bruder, 1994). Over the years, film-writing pedagogies have been informed by a variety of disciplines (e.g., cognitive studies, communication studies, cultural studies, film theory, literary studies, media literacy education, semiotics, and visual literacy), which have, of course, generated a number of critical frameworks. Recent scholarship provides systematic methods of inquiry for media or cultural productions, rather than looking specifically at one medium. In the last twenty years, there are four books (Bishop, 1999a; Costanzo 1984, 1992, 2004) and one dissertation (Schmertz, 2001) that address exclusively the incorporation of film into college writing courses. While journal articles on the topic are being published with more frequency for secondary English and language arts teachers, the resources are relatively scarce for college writing professors and instructors. For this reason, this dissertation endeavors to provide more information on the study of film as it applies to first-year-writing courses.

Like other scholarship, my research aims to look at the development of critical thinking skills through film study. I endeavor to further the discussion on academic literacy through the application of various analytical discourses (e.g., narrative, cultural, cinematic, and rhetorical analyses). This approach is, for the most part, grounded in the work of Ellen Bishop, William Costanzo, and Johanna Schmertz. At the same time, it is also influenced by scholarship for secondary English and writing instruction, whose

practices can be easily adapted for first-year writing courses. This dissertation offers additional cases of film study in first-year composition. Unlike the former sources, I have not selected my own classroom applications of film study to research. I have turned to practitioners who have years of experience incorporating film study into their writing courses. These participants have much to offer in the way of their teaching practices and their applications of film study. In addition, they are the experts who practice film study but have not documented their writing pedagogy. Their participation also demonstrates an interest in furthering the discussion of academic literacy through film study and its critical frameworks.

As writing practitioners, we need to understand how film study is applied in composition. For this reason, this dissertation looks at four first-year composition classrooms located at various community colleges in southern California. It presents two cross-case analyses based on a collection of

- Teacher interviews (e.g., recorded interviews, transcripts, summaries),
- Classroom observations (e.g., field notes, transcripts, summaries, case reports),
- Course handouts (e.g., course syllabi, course readings, film selections, discussion questions, film handouts, writing prompts), and
- Student materials (e.g., student papers, paper summaries, student surveys).

At the time of the study (Spring to Fall 2006), these participants were selected because of their integration of film study into writing course material (at least one film per term).

The professors and instructors had a minimum of four years experience teaching first-year composition on a regular basis (at least one course per term). As teachers at the two-

year college, the cases have a diversified student population and contain between fifteen to twenty-seven students. Their classrooms represent a maximum variation sampling (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 200) and, thereby, offer a variety of film-study applications to first-year composition teachers.

In the end, the dissertation study provides a wealth of information regarding film, critical thinking, and academic writing. It seeks the connections between theory and practice so that writing practitioners can make informed decisions regarding their teaching and learning philosophies that are central to their classroom practices.

### Conclusion

This chapter has provided a rationale for including film study in first-year writing instruction. This position is grounded in cultural studies writing pedagogy – specifically, its expanding notion of literacy, its understanding of learning, and its approach to the teaching of writing. Film is a unique medium, a pedagogical tool in and outside of the classroom. It offers practitioners the rare opportunity to link social practices to academic practices, to heighten student awareness of its persuasive appeals, and to mobilize dialogue regarding culture, power, and politics.

As will be shown in the next chapter, the scholarship and research on film study in secondary English and first-year writing instruction is varied and innovative. Teaching methodologies draw from several disciplines and apply a variety of analytical discourses to engage students in critical response. The application of narrative, cultural, cinematic, and rhetorical analyses provides students the tools and the academic languages in which

to read, discuss, evaluate, and write about film. These analytical lenses develop the critical thinking skills important for academic literacy.

## CHAPTER TWO

### *FILM IN COMPOSITION: A LITERATURE REVIEW*

#### Introduction

In the first chapter, I presented a rationale for the study of film in the first-year-composition classrooms. I contextualized this discussion within cultural studies writing pedagogy. This chapter reviews the literature in the field of English and composition, specifically focusing on the texts included in the study of film in secondary English and first-year writing instruction. The reviewed texts have been selected for their deliberate attention to film study in the writing classroom (Bishop, 1999a; Costanzo 1984, 1992, 2004; Schmertz, 2001). Some are grounded in media literacy education, a practice quite similar to cultural studies writing pedagogy, that is commonly practiced in English and language arts classrooms (Considine & Haley, 1999a-d; Goodman, 2001; Hobbs 1998; Krueger & Christel, 2001; Lund, 1998). Despite the differences in pedagogical level, the teaching objectives of media literacy are similar to, if not the same as, those expressed in cultural studies writing pedagogy. They both work to defamiliarize the film text along with other cultural texts; to improve critical thinking through study of film and popular culture; to show how film, like writing, is constructed to communicate persuasive arguments; and to impart a critical awareness of film and other media.

The references presented here are primarily professional development texts aimed at introducing new teaching methods to the inexperienced instructor as well as the seasoned professor of writing. While a few selections (Firek, 2003a-b; Golden, 2001; Teasley & Wilder, 1997) do not take a critical theory approach to the study of film, they

are valuable as 'starting point' texts that provide succinct introductions to cinematic technique (decoding, codes and conventions), production exercises (storyboarding, film and video production), and writing assignments (narrative, cultural, cinematic, and rhetorical analyses). The information they impart is easily coupled with critical and cultural theories in media literacy education and cultural studies writing pedagogy. With the help of these texts, writing practitioners can walk into their classrooms self-prepared and confident to begin teaching film and writing on film without extensive knowledge in the area.

The rest of the sources are grounded in critical and cultural studies theories. For this chapter, I selected texts that detail their writing pedagogy – how critical and cultural studies theories translate into critical student readings, guided student discussions and open dialogues, and teaching academic writing. Throughout my research, I have been especially interested in the application of film study within these theoretical approaches, much appreciative that they speak to missteps in their pedagogy as well as to their successful applications. Many of these sources also include reading material, assignment handouts, heuristics, and student writing samples. They have been valuable in providing teaching models for how the study of film might be organized as a unit of study or as the central theme for a composition course. This scholarship presents an informed practice and shows an interest in teaching other writing practitioners how to motivate their students through the use of film – particularly, to think and write critically and effectively.



## Applications of Film Study in Secondary English and First-Year Composition

Scholarship and research in the study of film in English and composition is innovative and eclectic. The integration of film in writing instruction is unique and appealing, making it a significant point of interest for composition studies. Since the mid-eighties and early nineties, it has contributed to expanded views of literacy, broader definitions of the text, and shifting perspectives on student learning as well as the political nature of the teaching of writing. All this is the result of interdisciplinary influences that challenged writing practitioners to rethink writing (and reading) instruction beyond the printed word. In this way, teaching writing through film study is socially and culturally relevant to composition studies as a field and, by extension, to English as a discipline.

Today, the study of film finds itself in secondary English classes and in all levels of college composition instruction from ESL and basic writing to advanced first-year and upper-level composition courses. While the nuances in teaching objectives vary from course to course and practitioner to practitioner, the applications of film study presented in this chapter are organized into four applications: narrative, cultural, cinematic, and rhetorical analyses. None of the applications is intended to be mutually exclusive. It is far more useful to consider the applications as parts of a whole teaching practice. The four applications, after all, have similar teaching objectives: to deconstruct the text and to construct a critical essay based on textual analyses. All things considered, any combination of these applications helps writing teachers to encourage students to 'do' close readings of the text and to develop their critical thinking skills through the

application of different academic discourses. This film study in writing instruction begins to cultivate emerging academic literacies. For the purposes of this chapter, the applications are treated separately to show what each analysis entails.

At first glance, it may be considered that the applications have more to do with improving reading skills than writing skills. Yet as the scholarship of James Berlin and Michael Vivion (1992), Chris Worsnop (1999), and Ellen Krueger and Mary Christel (2001) make clear, reading is integrally related to writing. Both are forms of production – particularly, of interpretation – and require an active reader to negotiate primary with secondary readings and to resist different readings of the text (Berlin, p. x).

Deconstructing the text is not simply the act of decoding, or of 'taking the text apart,' but also a matter of bringing together selected parts of the text to form a response – be it spoken or written (Worsnop, pp. 3-4, 8). These close readings "facilitate critical response," which begin with personal knowledge and experience and move to the application of critical frameworks (Krueger & Christel, p. 115). In this way, reading and writing are not diametrically opposed acts, but components of the same interpretative processes with the objective of making meaning, making sense of the words on the page or of the images (and words) on the screen. Based on this premise, the following applications of film study ultimately share the teaching objective of getting students to understand critical arguments and to form critical responses, particularly through reflective journal entries and critical writing.

As an unavoidable part of film study, viewing is also important to writing instruction. Like reading and writing, it is a kindred act of interpretation, having a significant role in the development of language literacies (Berthoff, 1988; Costanzo,

1984, 1985, 1986; Dombeck & Herndon, 2004; Gallagher, 1988). The study of film in writing instruction presents meaningful texts for students to 'read' to continue developing their emerging academic literacies. As mentioned in the first chapter, scholarship and research on visual literacy assert that the act of seeing is an active and interpretative process where viewers decide to direct their gaze and how long to direct their gaze. Visual perception does not exist independently of thought (Arnheim, 1980; Berger, 1972; Foreman & Shumway, 1992; Messaris, 1994, 2001). Seeing, thinking, and interpreting are simultaneous acts that cultivate perception and, by extension, responses to a text. These understandings have influenced the National Council of the Teachers of English (NCTE) and the International Reading Association (IRA) to recognize the act of viewing as a language skill alongside reading, writing, speaking, and listening (Golden, 2001; Krueger, 1998; Krueger & Christel, 2001; "NCTE beliefs," 2004).

In the English and composition classroom, film study is grounded in the rationale that the familiarity and popularity of film motivates students to engage in course readings, to participate in classroom dialogue, and to invest themselves in their writing (Krueger & Christel, 2001, pp. 68-70). Practitioners integrate film to make students aware of the movies (and other visual media) they (the students) consume by applying viewing strategies that develop critical thinking skills and generate reflective writing about the act of viewing (Hobbs, "Improving reading comprehension," 2001). One important goal of film study in secondary and first-year writing instruction is to build proficiency in critical response. The scholars discussed in this chapter undertake this goal through the following applications.

### *Narrative Analysis*

The first application of film study helps students to review the fundamentals of narrative discourse. Narrative analysis, after all, is "familiar territory" for secondary English and first-year writing students (Teasley & Wilder, p. 15). The application clarifies the knowledge of literary terms and concepts and engages students in close readings and critical writing through the application of narrative discourse (Kasper, 1999, p. 407b). Teachers generally do not delve into the aural-visual nature of the film itself, opting, for the moment, to treat these aspects as unproblematic or to address them as they come to mind in classroom discussions. From a critical thinking standpoint, narrative analysis gets students to cue into the text – be it filmic or written. Students cultivate their knowledge of narrative discourse through the film text and, later, apply this knowledge to the literary text through critical analysis (Golden, 2001). Writing assignments focus on the development of literary elements (e.g., plot, character, setting) and a variety of themes (e.g., search for identity, rites of passage, school, families, etc.) to analyze the possible meanings of the text (Costanzo, 2004, pp. 291-295; Teasley & Wilder, pp. 147-200).

On a practical level, narrative analysis provides the study of film a common discourse between teachers and students for classroom discussion and student writing. In composition studies, its implementation 'unpacks' narration as a rhetorical mode of discourse (Krueger & Christel, 2001, pp. 116-119). In secondary English classes and first-year writing courses (with a literature emphasis), the application of narrative analysis helps to produce close readings and critical writing. The latter scholarship in writing instruction implements a narrative analysis of film ultimately to advance student understanding and appreciation of literature (i.e., its use of language, its elements of

structure and style). Although film is today recognized as a cultural text worthy of study, its coupling with literature in secondary and first-year writing instruction carries implicit pedagogical objectives. In the past, a narrative analysis of film has been used to develop student 'taste' and discrimination (as discussed in Masterman [1985] and Bruder [1994]), to serve as a "window" to literature (Costanzo as cited in "Open the windows," 2004, p. 9a), and to build connections between popular culture and literature (Hobbs, 2001; Evans, 2004). These objectives paradoxically treat film as a "handmaiden" to (Bruder, 1994, p. 1) and an extension of literature (Monseu, 1998). As a medium subsumed within a literary framework, film is a supplementary text facilitating close readings of the medium's most popular form, the feature film.

It is difficult to resist noting the connections between film and literary genres like the novel and the short story. As a kind of storytelling, film shares with literature similar narrative structures, devices, and strategies (Amelio, 1969; Costanzo, 1992, 2004; Firek, 2003b). To ask students to 'read' a film text often necessitates some background information from the teacher. Students generally understand the word *text* as printed and published material. Their understanding of *text* does not include their own written work – much less, a feature film. Quite frequently, students regard feature films as a form of entertainment, not as a kind of storytelling with codes, conventions, and its own genres that can be analyzed (Fehlman, 1994; Teasley & Wilder, 1997). This viewpoint on the feature film as text requires an intellectual readjustment with few students resisting this application of narrative analysis. As mentioned in chapter one, teachers are advised to take a relatively light tone on the pleasures of film (Alverman, Moon, & Hagood, 1999; Masterman, 1985; Thoman et al., 2003). The point, after all, is to welcome this text into

the classroom and to show students that academic learning does intersect with social practices and can enhance their understanding of film and literature.

Two works addressing the introduction to film as text are *Reading the movies: Twelve great films on video and how to teach them* (1992) and *Great films and how to teach them* (2004). In a section titled "The art of storytelling" (*Reading the movies*, pp. 14-15; *Great films*, pp. 4-5), William Costanzo contextualizes film within Seymour Chatman's theory of narratology (1978). Like Chatman, Costanzo notes that there are common features to storytelling that are present regardless of the medium in which a story is told. Because the feature film and literary genres like the novel and the short story share similar narrative elements and structures, they can be evaluated using one analytical discourse. Granted the terms *plot*, *character*, *setting*, and *theme* are ascribed to literary analysis, they are quite useful for the discussion of narrative content in film. These terms and others (e.g., conflict, resolution, point of view, symbolism, and irony) focus on the 'how' of narrative. They provide a critical lens to understand not only feature films but also literature by way of feature films.

Practitioners who implement narrative analysis ultimately wish to see their students demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of these terms through active reading and written analysis. Sometimes, this implementation requires students to draw on their personal experiences. In *Visual messages: Integrating imagery into instruction* (1999c, p. 273), David Considine and Gail Haley briefly touch upon their assignments, which include applications of narrative discourse to popular feature films and, later, to books students have read for their English courses. Their teaching method gives students the opportunity to focus on the application of analytical discourse. The authors broaden

student understanding of literary terms (e.g., character and conflict) through the personal knowledge of and experience with film, a practice Stanley Aronowitz would call "good pedagogy" (1989, pp. 216-217).

Considine and Haley's approach in *Visual messages* eases students into critical reading. Hilve Firek (2003b, pp. 41-49) and John Golden (*Reading in the dark*, 2001 pp. 61-95) apply a similar practice and press their students further. Firek believes it is not enough for students to be able to define and identify the terms of narrative discourse. It is important that students understand this terminology so that they can achieve close readings of the text and discuss the text more articulately (p. 42). Golden applies similar reasoning, believing a reader-response approach must work toward analysis and synthesis. To help students accomplish this goal, both authors suggest turning acquired knowledge into applicable knowledge. Students can learn more about *plot*, *character*, *theme*, etc. by 'reading' film adaptations of novels or by viewing films that share similar literary themes being discussed for an English or a composition course. Their approach includes critical 'reading' handouts that require students to discuss how literary terms are developed in a feature film and, later, in a novel (Firek, pp. 44-45; Golden, p. 63). Their assignments help students broaden their concept of literary terms within one medium before turning to another. It is easy to see how the visual nature of film makes this approach more effective for literary terms like *character* and *setting*, which are, for students, more easily rendered on film than they are in writing, or literature (Golden, pp. xiv, 61-63, 66-68).

Aside from introducing literary terms, practitioners also apply narrative analysis to help students understand literary concepts. A frequent discussion on the development

of character might include a look at the *hero* or *heroine*. In any given text, this concept is situated in a cultural context, raising matters concerning gender roles and societal expectations of men and women among other issues (e.g., sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, class, etc.). To undertake this discussion, Velda Boyd and Marilyn Robitaille (1987) have their students analyze the role of the hero and heroine within social classifications. Some are conventional (e.g., the mythical Western man, the traditional mother) while others break from convention (e.g., the 'androgynous' male, the working woman). The essays assigned in Boyd and Robitaille's courses require students to consider the codes of the hero and heroine and to analyze the way in which these codes are developed on film (and other popular culture). Their writing prompts are creative and help students practice close readings of the text through the application of literary concepts. By extension, students contextualize these concepts within a discussion of cultural norms.

Robert Moss (1985, pp. 125-131) completes a similar unit with his students. A feature film like *King Kong* (1933) is a perfect vehicle for discussing concepts like hero, heroine, and villain. Like Boyd and Robitaille's application, Moss situates these concepts within a cultural context. To begin close readings of characterization, he first asks students to compose an essay regarding their conceptions of the hero, heroine, and villain. These essays generate in-class discussions – specifically, requiring a negotiation of conflicting interpretations on these concepts. The class's definition is sometimes compared to and contrasted with scholarly definitions of the terms. Then, Moss turns the class to *King Kong*, a text that presents some complexity for his first-year writing students. In the film, while the role of heroine is easily identified, the roles of hero and



villain are not so easily ascribed. At first glance, the character who ought to be the villain, the monstrous Kong, is actually the hero. Writing assignments on this film require students to negotiate the meanings of these concepts with how they unfold in the film. Moss's assignment is challenging for students who must work through the complexity of *King Kong*, especially in its final moments, where viewers "want the forces of civilization to win, but somehow do [not] want Kong to lose" (129). Noting this paradox is a step toward the development of critical response. It also enables students to develop an academic language by cultivating a deeper understanding of literary discourse. In this way, Moss's approach continues to develop student critical thinking skills that are important for academic literacy.

While the first application of film study applies a fundamental discourse, it is essential for providing a common vocabulary in which to discuss narrative as well as to establish the connections between film and the literary text. As discussed in this section, narrative analysis begins implementing one kind of academic discourse to encourage close readings and critical writing. Being challenged to understand film in a new context, students take the first step toward developing an academic literacy through narrative analysis. As suggested through the discussion on characterization, practitioners continue building on this first discourse through the following application.

### *Cultural Analysis*

The second application of film study has an integral role in narrative analysis. The discussion of character and theme is incomplete without delving into a cultural analysis. The application adds another dimension to critical response and helps

practitioners introduce a broad spectrum of social-cultural issues and experiences.

Practitioners rely on the familiarity and popularity of film to motivate students to evaluate public issues that might ordinarily be challenging to discuss – much less, read.

In this way, film serves as public pedagogy, having the potential of moving student critical response out of the classroom and into the world (Giroux, 2002, p. 6). The application of critical and cultural discourse presents new challenges. For English and composition, this particular study of film reframes textual analysis, student response, and the teaching of writing.

In writing pedagogy, the analytical discourse of cultural analysis is two-fold. On the one hand, it focuses on the ideological messages inherent to the text. In film (and other visual media), these messages are shaped through visual representations – representations of class, race, gender, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, etc. Practitioners interested in cultural analysis challenge students to cue into these ideological messages – particularly to what they communicate about society. On the other hand, cultural analysis also has a vested interest in examining the reader's ideologies, or the underpinnings of student response – specifically, the individual formations (e.g., race, class, gender, etc.) and the social structures (e.g., school, church, government, families, media, etc.) that influence beliefs about the world and thereby frame student response. In cultural studies pedagogy, this analysis presents the familiar idea that the text generates meaning, but also introduces the idea that readers are important participants of the reading process. It replaces the New Critical approach that emphasizes the 'correct' reading. Students find that there are multiple ways of reading a text (Harris, 1999, p. 71).

Recent composition scholarship has taken this two-fold approach to cultural analysis. While students recognize that ideologies are embedded in the text, they are not aware that their own ways of seeing are culturally constructed (Considine & Haley, 1999a; Dombeck & Herndon, 2004; Maloney & Miller, 1999; Schmertz, 2001; Wood, 1998; Worsnop, 1999). This part of cultural analysis is quite challenging for students. The scholars presented in the following section employ similar critical response methods that address the text as well as the students' perceptions and assumptions. The methods, at once, appeal to reader response methods and invite students to reflect on their own self-concepts – how they are similar to or different from those presented onscreen. In selected chapters of *Reading the movies* (1992) and *Great films* (2004), Costanzo draws attention to student subject positions regarding social-cultural issues before moving into an analysis of a cultural theme in a feature film. In their basic writing courses, Victoria Salmon (1999, pp. 140-143) and Johanna Schmertz and Annette Trefzer (1999, pp. 88-89) give their students entrance into difficult subject matter like race and class through empathy and identification. Their writing assignments ask students to cross identity boundaries. Differences in class, race, and gender may challenge first-year writing students. For this reason, the authors have selected feature films (*Educating Rita* [1983] and *Higher Learning* [1995], respectively) that are appropriate for young adults. Each film presents characters who are beginning their college lives and are facing similar social, cultural, or economic struggles. Salmon and Schmertz and Trefzer ask their students to select a character they identify with and describe his or her problems, noting the conflicts that reflect and do not reflect their own personal struggles.

Another writing practitioner, Donna Dunbar-Odom (1999) creates an 'authentic' connection to course material by having her students research their own university culture (pp. 45-47). In her advanced writing courses, Dunbar-Odom begins with personal knowledge and experience and, in the process, grants students a position of authority. Her first writing assignment invites students to share their own impressions of college life. From this assignment, the author moves into one of three readings: Cardinal Newman's "The idea of a university" (1982), Allan Bloom's *The closing of the American mind* (1988), or Mike Rose's *Lives on the boundary* (1990). She contextualizes the university experience through a discussion of film representations of college life (e.g., *National Lampoon's Animal House* [1978] and *Back to School* [1986]). Dunbar-Odom couples these readings and classroom discussion with John Singleton's *Higher Learning*, a film offering a representation of university culture. Singleton's film covers social-cultural issues like racism, violence, rape, alcohol abuse, and sexual orientation. To Dunbar-Odom, it offers a "'safe' way to begin talk[ing] about difficult issues" (pp. 51, 54). Providing a sense of distance, students consider their own perspectives on social-cultural issues through the film. This approach prepares them for their own roles as writers completing research. In her advanced writing course, the research paper requires students to complete library and field research (interviews with their peers). In this way, students situate their own personal knowledge and experience along a continuum of other responses. Students refer to their own and others' experiences as a point of comparison or contrast to *Higher Learning's* representation of the university and its students.

Like her colleagues, Dunbar-Odom works at widening the student's frame of reference – to see the world as encompassing multiple subject positions, some similar to

and different from their own. She and her colleagues encourage students to be self-reflexive about their cultural analyses – to write reflexively about course readings and film screenings along with classroom discussions and dialogues. Their application of cultural analysis urges students to make connections with the text through identification and empathy. Students write about these connections, learning about themselves and others while addressing weighty social-cultural issues. The writing assignments welcome students as members of the academic community and move students toward public writing.

The references presented thus far provide sound teaching practices for approaching the discourse of cultural analysis. Grounded in personal knowledge and experience, these practices can begin an investigation of subject positionings, or of what is seemingly 'natural.' The following authors do especially well in this regard, choosing the construction of gender as their thematic focus to question student responses to the text. In their articles, Laraine Wallowitz (2004) and Edward Maloney and Paul Miller (1999) present their methods for guiding students through cultural analysis, helping them understand that, like the text, response is a cultural construction. Particularly interested in interrogating gendered messages, the authors account how their students resist accepting the idea that film (and other media) can affect their values and beliefs and, by extension, their responses to gendered messages in a text. To demonstrate that a medium like film can reflect and affect them as readers, Wallowitz and Maloney and Miller use film and fairy tales to illustrate how they construct gendered messages and guide the reader's textual positionings (Maloney and Miller, pp. 41-42; Wallowitz, p. 28a-b).

In her secondary English courses, Wallowitz believes it important for practitioners to pay attention to what students are thinking as they read literature and films to challenge their commonplace notions of gender. Her article focuses on a unit she teaches in order to discuss how literature and the media influence ideas of masculinity and femininity. As a part of this unit, the author screens Disney's *Cinderella* and asks her students to note the way the text dichotomizes gender attributes. These attributes are categorized by qualities posed as questions regarding the characters: Who is active/passive? Who is outside/inside? Who is mobile/static? Who is demanding/nurturing? Who desires/is desired? The author's students are invited to consider answers to these questions among others. They evaluate characters who most reflect masculine and feminine qualities and give their readings of the characters who do not fit these male-female categories. Students consider the options *Cinderella* offers young girls and are asked to identify current feature films that are contemporary versions of the fairy tale (p. 29). These questions get students thinking about the Cinderella myth but also, on a larger scale, about the fact that its gender constructions are still with us today. This unit prepares students to read selections from Judith Fetterley's *The resisting reader: A feminist approach to American fiction* (1978) and Jonathon Culler's "Reading as a woman" (1983). This framework is applied to canonical fiction, giving students a critical eye with which to discuss gender construction in literature.

Maloney and Miller offer a similar approach but for first-year composition students. In their article, the authors describe a unit that includes the study of the fairy tale *Cinderella* through two critical articles (Marcia Lieberman's "'Some day my prince will come,'" [1972]; Louise Bernikow's "Cinderella: Saturday afternoon at the movies,"

[1980]). Each article discusses "the plasticity of fairy tales through time and culture" (p. 41) and reveals how the fairy tale carries long-standing, implicit values regarding femininity (e.g., the importance of beauty, passivity, obedience, and marriage). Through this guided discussion, students begin to see the way *Cinderella* depicts negative images of women – particularly, of aggressive and competitive women. Maloney and Miller do not stop here, however. The authors continue the unit with a look at *Pretty Woman* (1990), analyzing its presentation of women and noting its similarities to the fairy tale *Cinderella*. The authors note that most students enjoyed this feature film prior to viewing it in class but were unsure about how they should respond to it after analyzing *Cinderella* and after recognizing its similar treatment of women. Maloney and Miller note that their "students began to seriously entertain the possibility that film could affect their values as well as reflect them," "that their 'impressionable' years as children had latent effects and resonances that popular culture could appeal to in systematic ways" (42). In addition, students could no longer see film as escapist entertainment. They understood the need to be critical readers of film and critical readers of their own assumptions regarding the impact of this cultural text.

Readers of Wallowitz and Maloney and Miller can appreciate how the authors address the challenges facing practitioners. Film is not a cure-all for English and writing instruction (Caille, 1999, pp. 3-4; Mazer, 1999). A thematic focus on culture as represented on film is challenging subject matter for students. Teachers must work at bringing materials together that will not only generate discussion but also get students thinking about how a popular medium like film can implicitly contribute to the reproduction of ideology. Here, the application of cultural analysis can provide students

a way into reading materials, classroom discussion, and writing assignments. These approaches work with student knowledge and experience to question their own subject positions and examine how the text positions their textual responses. Cultural analysis makes visible what is seemingly 'natural' not only about class, race, and gender, but also about the processes of making meaning. In this practice, cultural analysis has a dual role in developing critical literacy and academic literacy.

### *Cinematic Analysis*

So far, my discussion of film study in English and writing instruction has tiptoed around cinematic technique. Practitioners can and do teach film exclusively as content, focusing on its narrative and its cultural themes through character dialogue and narrative voiceover. Depending on instructional objectives of a course, a content approach to film is justified. More often than not, cinematic analysis is deemed unnecessary due to the assumption that students already possess a film literacy through years of watching films and other visual media. Although students have internalized the discourse of film, there is a need for its instruction for exactly this same reason (Considine & Haley, 1999c, p. 270a-b; Maness, 2004, p. 50b; Messaris, 1994). For many students, film is a "naturalized text," "an object that has become so familiar to [them] that the mechanisms by which that object produces meaning and value [...] are often obscured by [their] relative familiarity with the object" (Maloney & Miller, 1999, p. 33). The scholars in this section believe an introduction to cinematic technique is important for students to learn in order to 'read' film critically. To study cinematic technique draws attention to the medium itself (i.e., how it communicates through images and sounds) and makes deliberate the act of



viewing. Being introduced to a new academic discourse, a cinematic analysis of film presents students yet another way in which to develop critical thinking and academic literacy.

In English and writing instruction, practitioners begin this analysis with the media literacy tenet – that film, like writing, is a highly constructed text. It is a mode of communication, consisting of different languages that produce meaning through separate technologies and discourses (Thoman et al., 2003, p. 20). To analyze the medium, practitioners introduce the basics of cinematic technique using a glossary of film terms. Although any glossary from a film studies text is suitable for this purpose, scholars usually present their students an adapted version of the most useful terms (Considine & Haley, 1999c, pp. 287-291; Dziedzic, 2002, p. 70a-b; Golden, 2001, pp. 1-26; Guista, 1992; Krueger & Christel, 2001, pp. 1-3, 41; Schmertz, 2001, pp. 166-170). A review of these terms is normally coupled with a demonstration of these cinematic techniques at work through an instructional video on film terminology (Krueger & Christel, 2001, p. 41; Teasley & Wilder, 1997, pp. 19, 21) and/or by identifying these techniques through a series of film clips (Considine & Haley, 1999c, pp. 287-291; Schmertz, 2001, pp. 89-91). Golden (2001, pp. 26-34) provides a list of exemplary films for students to practice identifying terms and to describe how these techniques are used. Teasley and Wilder do the same but advise practitioners to use movies students know well. This way, students concentrate on learning film terminology and can "see these familiar films in new ways" (1997, pp. 9-10, 21-24). Contrary to popular belief, learning cinematic technique for the purpose of writing instruction is not a time-consuming undertaking. Not more than two class sessions are needed to teach this material (Golden, p. 26; Schmertz, p. 88).

To help students practice effective viewing strategies, practitioners generally structure cinematic analysis into pre-viewing, viewing, and post-viewing activities. Before screening a film, teachers activate the students' background knowledge of the film content and other related material. This step might begin with a classroom discussion regarding the film's theme. Discussion may include personal knowledge and experiences (e.g., what students know and where they stand on the film's cultural issue), predictions about the film's content (i.e., based on film's title and director), a review of important film techniques and key information (e.g., vocabulary), the cultural significance of the film (e.g., zeitgeist and historical dates) (Evans, 2004, p. 32a; Fehlman, 1994, p. 43b), and production information regarding the film (Costanzo, 2004, pp. 117-118; Haspel, 2002, pp. 250-252; Kasper & Singer, 2001, pp. 18-19). In short, pre-viewing exercises give students an opportunity to contextualize a film within their own personal schema and to continue widening the scope of their knowledge.

The next step involves viewing the film. To make a film screening an educational experience, practitioners normally assign a specific task for students to do while watching the movie. The task might assign groups of students to focus on a particular character (Krueger & Christel, 2001, pp. 70-71) or a cinematic technique to note its development throughout the film (Schmertz, 2001, pp. 129-130; Schmertz & Trefzer, 1999, p. 93). More often, practitioners require students to record their observations on viewing practice handouts (Teasley & Wilder, pp. 25, 28). This strategy helps students organize their observations into cinematic sights and sounds among other categories (e.g., literary and dramatic aspects as well as characters and events). General note-taking is also encouraged. Timothy Corrigan (2004, pp. 26-27) presents a shorthand system for noting

technical information. But for students who find note-taking a distraction (especially when they have not seen the film being screened), practitioners also opt to break the film into meaningful segments or replay important scenes so that students can record their observations and discuss important points during these breaks (Golden, 2001, pp. 96-154; Haspel, 2002, pp. 252-253; Teasley & Wilder, p. 27). Viewing activities emphasize critical viewing and help students recall details they might have forgotten after viewing the film, especially when completing a writing assignment.

After screening a film, practitioners can turn to a number of post-viewing exercises to generate discussion about the film. One activity completes a viewing exercise, in which students track the development of a character or the use of a film technique. The second part of this assignment requires students to give a short presentation on the character or film technique they were assigned while viewing the movie (Christel 2001; Schmertz; Schmertz & Trefzer). This approach is helpful in generating classroom discussions on character motivation, cultural context, and social-cultural issues. Discussions like these can also be coupled with open-ended questions regarding vivid uses of cinematic technique (Brooks, 1998, p. 23a; Costanzo, 2004, p. 117; Teasley & Wilder, p. 30). Instructors having DVD recorders in the writing classroom can easily review parts of a film that impressed students. The review could involve viewing and listening exercises, in which practitioners screen key moments with or without sound and with or without having students look at the screen (Fehlman, 1994, pp. 40b-43b). This particular exercise helps students recognize film's construction of meaning – how it is dependent on many techniques but especially sights and sounds. In brief, cinematic analysis asks students to cue into the text and into their own thoughts as

they make sense of the images or sounds onscreen. These post-viewing exercises develop student critical response to film.

The purpose of cinematic analysis is to learn and hone critical viewing strategies. The primary way teachers evaluate students' knowledge and understanding of cinematic technique is through critical writing assignments (Fischer, 1999, p. 173). Teachers can assign critical writing based on a close reading of a scene. Shot-by-shot analysis applies elements of narrative and cultural analysis but largely focuses on cinematic technique and its importance to developing the film's theme (Costanzo, 2004, pp. 120, 298; Schmertz & Trefzer, 1999, pp. 91, 93-94). Practitioners can also sharpen critical response through the study of genre films. This cinematic analysis introduces students to genre characteristics and a number of classic films while honing critical thinking and writing skills (e.g., through definition, division-classification, and comparison-contrast analyses) (Considine & Haley, 1999c, pp. 279-281; Teasley & Wilder, 1997, pp. 72-113). The movie review is a more traditional writing assignment for cinematic analysis. Students apply what they have learned about cinematic technique to a film screened in class or to a film they have watched on their own. Although the movie review is a familiar form in popular culture (e.g., through television programs and newspaper articles), students need to study its methods by looking over professional sources (Costanzo, 2004, pp. 119-120, 299) and student reviews (Teasley & Wilder, pp. 35-43). Practitioners can help students identify the purpose, audience, and parts of its structure (e.g., the catchy opening, the basic production details, a brief summary, the film's treatment of content, the quality of film and acting, and the final note recommending or not recommending the film) (Corrigan, 2004, pp. 6-9; Teasley & Wilder, 1997, p. 30). The assignment requires students to

evaluate a film critically through the application of narrative, cultural, and cinematic discourses.

In scholarship and research, alternative modes of textual formation are also explored. Filmmaking is another way to form critical responses (Firek, 2003a, pp. 21-25; Krueger & Christel, 2001, pp. 124-126; Lund, 1998; Schafer, 2000). Film production is a small practice but is supported in composition studies (Berlin, 1996, p. 112; Costanzo, 2004, pp. 41-42, 302; Lund, 1998; Schmertz, 2001, pp. 88-91) as well as by teaching organizations like the Alliance for a Media Literate America, the Center for Media Literacy (Thoman et al., 2003), and the NCTE ("NCTE beliefs," 2004; "On composing," 2003). Filmmaking is an ambitious undertaking even with the availability and affordability of digital video cameras and digital video editing software (e.g., iMovie, Premiere, Final Cut Pro). This project requires equipment, expertise, time, and, more importantly, funding. Practitioners manage to work around these obstacles, however, by offering students the 'hands-on' experience of production through assignments like screenwriting (Blau, 1995) and storyboarding (Bishop, 1999c, pp. 65-67; Christel, 2001, pp. 55-57; Costanzo, 2004, pp. 299-300, 302; Firek, 2003b, pp. 44-46; Golden, 2001; Teasley & Wilder, 1997, pp. 69-70). Their main objective, however, is to focus on traditional forms of knowledge production – mainly, critical response through academic writing. Although this practice has some way to go, filmmaking offers yet another way to demystify the medium, breaking down the film text not only into its narrative, cultural, and cinematic elements and discourse, but also into parts of its production process (e.g., development, pre-production, production, post-production). Studying parts of the filmmaking process makes visible the construction of film and, not to mention, creates a

new academic community that is collaborative and engaged. Filmmaking deepens student understanding of cinematic technique. It synthesizes knowledge in alternative ways using different technologies and modalities.

In English and composition, cinematic analysis challenges students to understand film through its own formal properties. This approach looks at film as film and cultivates an appreciation of the medium – to note how film choices (e.g., camera angle, shot duration, editing, etc.) affect the meaning of the text and the viewer's response to the text. Cinematic analysis gives students the tools to decode the film text and the academic discourse in which to form critical responses. This practice is useful when coupled with narrative and cultural analyses but is especially important to the following application.

### *Rhetorical Analysis*

The final application, rhetorical analysis, is another framework used to understand and interpret texts. In English and writing instruction, rhetorical analysis is broadly conceived as the study of communication. While all texts have their own rhetoric (i.e., technologies and discourses in which to construct and shape meaning), they also have similarities. Essays, books, and films are built upon a main idea (theme), which authors and directors develop through a careful selection (unity, completeness) of material, which is arranged (structure) to create a text that hangs well together (coherence). A rhetorical analysis of the text examines the manner in which the message is constructed. It combines elements of the former applications, focusing on the text's verbal (e.g., appeals to logic, emotion, and character; structure of argument; use of language and style), visual

(e.g., cinematic technique), and aural (e.g., dialogue/voiceover, music/soundtrack, and sound effects) devices and strategies.

In cultural studies (and media literacy) pedagogy, all texts are rhetorical. Whether written by poets, historians, teachers, or students, all texts, including film (and other media), are ascribed with ideological values and beliefs (Berlin, 1991). For some practitioners, the pedagogical need to teach rhetorical analysis is especially important given the ubiquitous nature of film and other media in our culture. Knowing how to deconstruct a medium like film gives students the opportunity to understand how it communicates and shapes its persuasive appeals (Considine & Haley, 1999a, pp. 22-28; Thoman et al., 2003, p. 4). Practitioners who use this application in writing instruction share an interest studying film, not as an art form, but as a cultural text with social, cultural, and political dimensions. Because film also stands as a reflection of audience values and social ideologies, audience reception (e.g., cultural knowledge) has a significant role in understanding the meaning that is generated from this text as well.

Within this larger discussion, questions of representation and reality are posed. The pedagogical concern is to provide students with a heuristic in which to deconstruct the text, to understand it in terms of its context, its persuasive appeals, and its impact on the audience from a historical and/or a contemporary perspective. To begin its application, practitioners have their students frame the text within a rhetorical situation, raising questions regarding its purpose and audience (Hobbs, 1998, p. 50a-b; Krueger, 1998, p. 19a). This analysis challenges students to understand the author's (or the director's) intention; the target audience; the narrator's voice; the content's message; the text's structure; and the representation of ideological messages (e.g., class, race, gender,

etc.). Practitioners want their students to think rhetorically about texts – to the way rhetorical devices and strategies position readers and their responses (Bishop, 1999c, pp. 64-65; Considine & Haley, 1999a, pp. 24-26; Thoman et al., 2003, p. 4; Wicks, 1983, p. 56). This focus sometimes leads to a critical analysis of the film industry and its commercial goals – particularly, of how it reflects and manufactures desires through its representations of lifestyles and ideological values (Considine & Haley, 1999b; Goodman, 2001; Hobbs, 1998; Krueger, 1998). Rhetorical analysis may be the basics of English and writing instruction, yet it is applicable to print *and* nonprint media (Berlin, 1996, p. 93; Lamb, 1998, p. 109a; Schmertz & Trefzer, 1999, p. 86; Wicks, 1983, p. 52). For this reason, the application is often associated with the development of critical literacy and student agency. In this study, it is also marks entrance into another academic discourse community.

In English and composition instruction, the application of rhetorical analysis gives students the critical framework in which to begin their examination of the text and to frame critical responses. For practitioners, it is important that students understand how the text communicates rhetorically to its audience. In her writing class, Ellen Bishop (1999c, pp. 63-65) explores the issue of race in America. The author turns to race in South Africa before looking at race in America so as to provide a sense of distance to its weighty matter. She begins with three texts: *Cry Freedom* (an American film directed by Richard Attenborough); *A dry, white season* (a novel by the British author, Andre Brink); and *A Dry, White Season* (an American film directed by the South African director, Euzan Palcy). One of her assignments instructs students to analyze the opening scenes of the two films, *Cry Freedom* (1987) and *A Dry, White Season* (1989). For this



assignment, students must analyze the aural-visual strategies each film uses to draw in its audience. They apply their knowledge of film terminology, examining how the directors create and shape meaning in the opening of both films. They discuss how each opening begins to position them as readers and prepares them for the film's message. As a part of this classroom discussion, it is inevitable that students note the different ways Hollywood and foreign films communicate – in particular, how each director uses race as a rhetorical device. In both films, race is used as “a visual marker” (Bishop, p. 65). It seduces and creates meaning, drawing its viewers into the film and investing a social and political significance to the aural-visual images. Through this assignment, Bishop's students apply critical thinking skills. They analyze how each text introduces the discussion of race to the audience.

In Schmertz and Trefzer's (1999, pp. 95-98) practice, the application of rhetorical analysis serves multiple functions. One of these is to look at the rhetorical dimensions in a text in order to help students become members of an academic community. Like Bishop (pp. 63-65), the authors focus on audience, but they are particularly interested in how students learn to become the target audience of a text. Their research and practice demonstrates that deconstructing film's ideological messages is dependent on student understanding of the relationship between texts and their intended audiences (p. 95). In their practice, Schmertz and Trefzer assign John Singleton's film, *Higher Learning*. Discussed earlier in the chapter, this film selection offers students multiple characters to identify with. This cultural analysis approach helps students learn about themselves and others, but it also serves as an entrance into the text. The following step, looking at the film's rhetorical situation, begins moving students toward ideological critique. In order

for students to be successful critical thinkers of ideological messages, they need the tools to deconstruct the text. Schmertz and Trefzer provide students narrative and film terminology as academic discourses to begin their textual analysis of *Higher Learning*. Yet what is crucial for students to understand is one aspect of the text's rhetorical situation. Students must know Singleton, the director of the text, and must also be aware of his relationship with the subject matter in his film. Considering this information situates the text, revealing Singleton's goals and interests. It informs the ways *Higher Learning* communicates messages – in particular, the rhetorical strategies Singleton uses to appeal to the audience. For Schmertz and Trefzer, students can become the intended audience by questioning how the text addresses or fails to address them properly as members of the intended audience. This kind of analysis requires students not only to analyze the rhetorical choices Singleton makes but also to write themselves into the academic community.

Like Schmertz and Trefzer, James Berlin (1996, pp. 124-130) also explores the rhetorical choices of the text. But rather than discussing these choices in terms of the director, Berlin opts to present his application through a rhetorical analysis of film and its narrative resolutions. As a part of his practice, the author investigates the meaning of the text through binary oppositions, contradictions or conflicts in the text that remain unanswered by the film's ending. According to Berlin, it is the practitioner's objective to ask students to find the binary oppositions in the text. It is his belief that through this investigation students can learn the ideological leaning, or the preferred reading, of the text. His practice instructs students to problematize the contradictions between visual and verbal information and the film's representation of ideological messages.

For example, his application of rhetorical analysis of film study looks closely at *Other People's Money* (1991). The movie is about a corporate raider, Larry Garfield, who threatens a hostile takeover of a corporation, the New England Wire & Cable. To protect the company from its demise, Andrew Jorgenson, the head of the company, recruits the help of his stepdaughter, Kate Sullivan, who is a New York lawyer. For Berlin, the movie presents an inconsistent binary opposition in its treatment of gender and class. In the film, Jorgenson and Garfield are characterized by their blatant sexism. Although Jorgenson seeks Sullivan's help, he must be persuaded to do so and ignores her advice, risking the company's future and the welfare of his employees. Jorgenson's attitude and behavior reinforces the order of the patriarch while Garfield's is unashamedly sexist in its forward advances toward Sullivan. At their first meeting, Garfield propositions her quite blatantly. In spite of this treatment, the film positions the viewer to consider Sullivan a feminist who has arrived to "reconcile the old capitalist order" (p. 127). She accomplishes this feat but does so without changing either of the men's attitudes toward women.

In a similar discussion, Berlin draws attention to the film's representation of class. As employees of the New England Wire & Cable, the working class are important members of the community and represent an extended family. For all their importance, the workers generally do not have a voice throughout the film or during its most important segment, at the stockholder's meeting. The film presents Jorgenson as paternal toward the working class, soothing his employees in father-like tones when he is addressed by an employee. The working class defer to Jorgenson as the patriarch who speaks in their best interests. Like the former example, this contradiction goes

unexplored and unquestioned. Although *Other People's Money* has other inconsistent binary oppositions, the two presented here raise suspicions regarding how the film resolves complex social and political issues. It is up to viewers to note these inconsistencies and to use them as a part of a critique regarding the film's overall meaning.

In English and composition, the application of rhetorical analysis introduces another critical framework in which to deepen their understanding of film and its ideological messages. This framework restructures thought, making film a powerful medium that, at once, reflects and shapes audience beliefs and attitudes. Students develop their critical thinking skills in this regard. They come to see texts as rhetorical, using codes and conventions to communicate. Knowing this analytical discourse problematizes the pleasure they find in film and, for some practitioners, protects students from damaging ideologies. Rhetorical analysis gives students the tools to move toward "academic, critical literacies" (Schmertz & Trefzer, 1999, p. 87).

### Conclusion

This chapter familiarizes readers with the terrain of film study in English and composition. It is an application that appeals to different types of learners and different modes of learning (Fehlman, 1985; Gallagher, 1988; Krueger & Christel, 2001; Thoman et al., 2003). Practitioners initially include film in English and writing instruction to level the academic playing field and to engage students in critical response. As seen in this chapter, their practices work beyond the rationale of film as shared literacy. For these scholars, the challenge of film study in English and writing instruction is "to transfer

[student] interest in the film to a need to listen, write, discuss, and utilize critical thinking skills" (Vetrie, 2004, p. 44a).

The four applications of film study are sound instructional methods that are, for the most part, mutually inclusive. They provide critical frameworks that offer different ways of seeing, or 'reading,' the film text and, by extension, the written text. Film study in English and writing instruction also builds background knowledge in narrative, cultural, cinematic, and rhetorical analyses and discourses. Through these analytical frameworks, students receive a strong foundation in film study and written critical response and, at the same time, widen the scope of their personal schemata (Kasper, 1999, p. 413a-b; Vetrie, 2004, p. 44a).

In the following chapter, I discuss *Film in composition* as a qualitative study. As discussed thus far, interest in this research is supported by the emergence of cultural studies as a composition paradigm and by the impetus to address the ubiquitous nature of popular media in our culture. *Film in composition* is part of the field's challenge to support theoretical and pedagogical innovation. The application of film in first-year composition is prevalent today through the advent of new distribution technologies. Various scholars in and out of the discipline believe these advancing technologies present an opportunity to look more closely at film and other aural-visual media (Berlin, 1991, 1992, 1996; Kress, 2003a-b; Masterman, 1985; Messaris, 1994, 2001; Penrod, 1997 a-b; Thoman, 1998; Trimbur, 1988, 1993). Chapter three presents the methodology for conducting *Film in composition* in the college writing classroom.

## CHAPTER THREE

### *FILM IN COMPOSITION: METHODOLOGY*

#### Introduction

*Film in composition* is a study that was conducted from April 2006 to April 2007. The study's design is grounded in the scholarship and research presented in the first two chapters of the dissertation. In these chapters, I explain the pedagogical rationale for integrating film into composition and present a review of the literature related to the project. This groundwork sets the course for the remainder of the dissertation, a qualitative study on the use of film in college writing instruction. From a cultural studies-media literacy standpoint, this investigation is timely (Giroux, 2002; Thoman et al., 2003). Since the mid-eighties and early nineties, there has been a proliferation of technologies – in particular, the development of film distribution technologies. The availability and affordability of film's multiple formats have transformed the medium into a readable text, one that can easily be incorporated into the classroom to enrich instruction. In the field of composition, the use of film is, by word of mouth, a commonplace. Its application merits further exploration. *Film in composition* moves toward this goal, contributing to the existing scholarship in the field (Bishop, 1999; Costanzo, 1984, 1992, 2004; Schmertz, 2001). It is research that illustrates how the study of film fosters the development of critical thinking skills that are important to academic literacy.

In addition to composition scholarship, *Film in composition* is also grounded in qualitative research methods (Erlandson et al., 1993; LeCompte & Preissle, 1993;

Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Maxwell, 2005; Miles & Huberman, 1994). The third chapter details the methodology for this investigation, contextualizing the participants and the cases featured later in the dissertation. This chapter opens with three research questions that informed the design and implementation of the study. The results of *Film in composition* are twofold: a cross-case analysis of two critical frameworks (e.g., narrative-cultural and cinematic-rhetorical analyses) and an examination of the consequences of film study in college writing instruction. These reports, which are detailed later in the chapter, were an important part of the study. They were constructed using methods integral to qualitative research methods:

- Teacher interviews (e.g., recorded interviews, transcripts, summaries),
- Classroom observations (e.g., field notes, transcripts, summaries, case reports),
- Course handouts (e.g., course syllabi, assigned readings, film selections, discussion questions, film handouts, writing prompts), and
- Student materials (e.g., student papers, paper summaries, student surveys).

Throughout the study, these research methods guided data collection and analysis. The reports yield interesting connections between theory and practice.

### Research Questions

Most, if not all, studies begin with a set of questions that focus the scope of research. In this study, I created and shaped three research questions that explored the pedagogical rationales, the analytical frameworks, and the implications of film study in first-year composition. These questions are integrally tied to the goals of the study: to

introduce new teaching methods to inexperienced instructors as well as seasoned professors of writing (Maxwell, p. 5). The questions are listed below.

- *What is the theoretical rationale for including film in first-year writing instruction?*
- *What critical frameworks do practitioners apply to hone critical thinking skills that are essential for academic literacy?*
- *What are the implications of incorporating an aural-visual medium like film into the writing classroom?*

Throughout the study, my research process was guided by these questions. As will become clear in later sections, they informed the methods of data collection and analysis that would be implemented in the study. Each research question was significant to investigating a particular component of this teaching and classroom practice. The questions are discussed in more detail in this section.

The first research question, addressed in chapters one and two, considered the rationale for the study of film in first-year composition. According to cultural studies writing pedagogy, the inclusion of film in composition is grounded in one of “two commonplace practices”; the first is the sympathetic practice of “begin[ning] student writing with a topic ‘close to the self,’ close to student’ experience” (George & Trimbur, 2001, p. 82). This teaching perspective affirms that the study of film in composition is a beneficial way to motivate critical thinking for classroom dialogue and academic writing. When students begin with what they know – in this case, a social practice – there rests the possibility to hone intellectual skills. Because film is a medium with which students are familiar, student intellectual skills can be developed through prior knowledge and



experience and the application of different analytical frameworks onto the film text. In this way, writing teachers create a pedagogical space for student knowledge to meet school knowledge. Here, cultural studies writing pedagogies along with media literacy theories guide the study and teaching of writing so that students sharpen their abilities to generate critical arguments while also learning that there are multiple ways of knowing and learning.

The second question, addressed to some degree in chapter two, worked at making connections between theory and practice. It explored the pedagogy of the film-writing course, examining the teaching practices of various postsecondary writing teachers. In composition, a cultural studies writing pedagogy suggests what this practice generally involves. The writing classroom gives serious consideration to noncanonical texts in addition to traditional texts. Like written texts, film and other aural-visual media are read, interpreted, and evaluated for their methods of argument and persuasion. This approach provides a systematic method of inquiry for analyzing media and cultural productions. It does not present analytical frameworks specific to the study of film. To address the signifying systems and characteristics that distinguish film from other media, this research question analyzed the critical methodologies (e.g., narrative, cultural, cinematic, and rhetorical analyses) that are unique to the medium. It focused on the ways college writing teachers apply analytical frameworks to encourage critical thinking. These frameworks give coherence to writing instruction – particularly to course readings, film selections, classroom dialogues, and writing assignments. The frameworks not only illustrate the different ways in which films communicate, but also introduce students to multiple forms of critical inquiry (Berlin, 1996; Schlib & Clifford, 2001). In the end, this

research question investigated how teachers restructure critical responses to texts and how they immersed students in academic language and argument through the study of film.

On a larger scale, the third research question considered the implications of including film in first-year composition. Like the second question, it continues to draw the connections between theory and practice. The question was designed to revisit the broader issues concerning writing instruction and academic literacy. According to a cultural studies-media literacy paradigm, a writing curriculum must reflect the needs of the day, revising its objectives to be relevant to the educational system, to its students, and to society as a whole (Kress, 1999; Thoman, et al., 2003). This composition paradigm has shaped the way practitioners think of reading and writing in today's media-oriented world. Technologies like film and its corresponding distribution media have changed society and have prompted educators, including those in composition, to reconsider their theoretical and pedagogical values and beliefs on the meaning of literacy. Given the influence of this paradigm, the final research question focused on what is gained and sacrificed from the inclusion of film in the writing classroom. This discussion is relevant to professors and instructors deciding how the study of film might best be applied at the postsecondary level.

Together, these research questions attempt to understand how film is applied in first-year composition. According to the composition scholars noted in this chapter as well as those in chapters one and two, film is conducive to the objectives of college writing instruction. This study investigates a popular teaching practice that has little existing scholarship and research at the postsecondary level. Its reports offer additional

cases that elucidate how the study of film develops critical thinking skills for academic writing.

### Methods of Data Collection

During the study, I applied qualitative methodologies to answer the research questions: *What is the theoretical basis for including film in first-year writing instruction? What critical frameworks do practitioners apply to hone critical thinking skills that are essential for academic literacy? What are the implications of incorporating an aural-visual medium like film into the writing classroom?* Like each research question, each method of data collection also worked at understanding the application of film in college writing instruction. The following section presents the design of the study and the implementation of qualitative methodologies for teacher interviews, classroom observations, and the collection of artifacts. Together, these methods helped me to triangulate the collected data, corroborating (or not) what participants discussed in their interviews with how they applied film in the classroom and how students responded to this instruction.

### *Teacher Interviews*

A criterion-based selection was instrumental to selecting participants for this qualitative study (Maxwell, p. 88). For this selection, I considered the practitioners who I wanted to learn from and who would benefit the study – namely, first-year writing professors and instructors. To elicit rich and reliable information, I sought teachers who

- Teach first-year composition on a regular basis (at least one course per term),
- Have a minimum of four years teaching experience,
- Integrate film in their writing classrooms on a regular basis (at least one film per term),
- Apply film study to teach different analytical frameworks (narrative, cultural, cinematic, and rhetorical analyses),
- Believe film builds critical thinking skills important to critical response (e.g., writing and reading), and
- Consider the study of film as a way toward academic literacy.

To refine my participant-selection process, I solicited writing practitioners in southern California – most notably, in and near Los Angeles County. Participants were selected through a network sample, “a strategy in which each successive participant or group is named by a preceding group or individual” (LeCompte & Preissle, pp. 73-74). Informal letters of introduction were sent via electronic mail to former colleagues; they were also sent to the department chairs and writing program directors at numerous two-year and four-year institutions. (See Appendix A - Letters of Introduction.) Both informant groups forwarded my electronic mail, a kind of tacit referral, to colleagues and/or to English or writing faculty in the area. This approach to network selection accommodated an array of participants teaching at various institutions, predominantly from two-year colleges.

The initial network sample included twenty-one participants – fifteen of which remained in the study. Additional referrals introduced four more professors and instructors from various community colleges. Each of the practitioners was invited to

participate in the study and was informed of their rights as participants. Each signed consent forms and later received pseudonyms. (See Appendix B - Teacher Informed Consent.) IRB approved teacher interviews were conducted from June to November 2006. These interviews were conducted as semi-structured conversations to encourage the participants to respond openly and spontaneously. Carefully constructed interview questions guided the conversation, which generally took an hour to complete. (See Appendix C - Interview Questions.) During the interview, I took notes and taped each participant on a *Radioshack Voice-Activated Cassette Recorder*. This recording device was visible throughout the conversation. To protect the identities of the participants, I transcribed the recorded conversations myself over a four-to-five hour period, coding the material into different sections (e.g., Educational Background, Teaching Experience, Preparation in Film Studies, Teaching and Learning Philosophies, etc.). These transcriptions were returned to the participants for their review to member check the document for accuracy (LeCompte & Preissle, p. 235). Of the nineteen practitioners interviewed, eight participants amended the transcript, offering additional details to the document.

In this study, seventeen of the practitioners were community college writing teachers. To focus my analysis of this population, I eliminated two participants: both holding full-time, lecturer positions at four-year institutions. Table 1: *Participant Analysis* (on the next page) examines this population according to their teaching appointments, teaching experience, degree level, and degree kind. At the time of the study, seven of the remaining practitioners held full-time appointments at community colleges. Nine of the seventeen participants had four-to-ten years of experience teaching

writing; five had eleven-to-twenty years of experience; and three had more than twenty-one years of experience teaching composition. Of the seventeen participants, eight have doctorates. Many have degrees in literature with advanced degrees in composition and rhetoric or writing-related programs (e.g., creative writing, journalism, communications, language arts certifications). Three participants have degrees in film studies or film-related programs (e.g., film education, scriptwriting), and two participants have earned degrees in cultural-studies related fields (e.g., modern studies and media production). All of the participants draw on their educational background – and self-preparation – to include film in composition.

Table 1

*Participant Analysis*

| <i>Teaching Appointment</i> |    |
|-----------------------------|----|
| Full Time                   | 7  |
| Part Time                   | 10 |

| <i>Teaching Experience</i> |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| 4-10                       | 9 |
| 11-20                      | 5 |
| 21+                        | 3 |

| <i>Degree Level</i> |   |
|---------------------|---|
| M.A. / M.F.A.       | 9 |
| Ph.D.               | 8 |

| <i>Degree Kind*</i>      |    |
|--------------------------|----|
| Literature / Composition | 16 |
| Film Studies             | 3  |
| Cultural Studies         | 2  |

\*Some participants have multiple degrees.

For the participants, the application of film in writing instruction is appealing. The rationale for implementing film is grounded in four teaching and learning philosophies:

- The pleasures students experience when watching film,
- The need to address the different ways films communicate,
- The importance of understanding how films transmit ideological messages, and
- The value in exploring the common elements between film and print.

Of course, these philosophies align the participants' teaching practices with cultural studies-media literacy pedagogies. The participants believe film is a text that enables students to make the transition from social to academic practice. It is their belief that this text facilitates critical thinking skills, helping students respond academically to a medium they watch on a regular basis.

In addition to teaching and learning philosophies, I also found patterns in the ways the participants approach writing and reading instruction. As cultural studies-media literacy writing teachers, the practitioners take a balanced approach to writing instruction. In their composition classrooms, the participants assign a variety of texts, one of which is the narrative film. For example, Clara Bautista, Dr. Madeline Bowman, Dr. Anne Bratton-Hayes, and Dr. Eric Fischer – four participants in the study – assign feature films (e.g., *Notting Hill*, *Mi Familia*) and genre movies (e.g., *Vertigo*, *All the Pretty Horses*). The film selections are movie kinds with which students are familiar. These readings draw on student knowledge and experience with film to facilitate critical viewing, classroom dialogues, and student writing.

To hone academic literacy, the participants do not assign the film text in isolation. Feature and genre films are coupled with a number of course readings. For the participants discussed here, the readings include

- Articles on social-cultural issues (e.g., “Why marriages fail,” “Images of gender and family,” “Love: The right chemistry”),
- Essays on film (e.g., “Moving pictures: Writing to tell stories,” “Hitchcock’s use of profiles in *Vertigo*,” “Last laugh: Was Hitchcock’s masterpiece a private joke?”), and
- Works of literature (e.g., “Vows,” “A tapestry of hope,” “In the land of the free,” “On being a real westerner,” and *All the pretty horses*).

The reading assignments function in two ways. First, they provide a “lens” for analyzing narrative films. The readings are an interpretative framework for deconstructing the function and structure of the film text. Second, they restructure student critical responses to texts. The readings provide students an academic discourse for reading and writing critically about film. Through the reading and film selections, the practitioners give students an opportunity to make connections between and among texts. This balanced approach to writing and reading instruction fosters analysis and synthesis.

All in all, the teacher interviews generated multiple conversations on the role and use of film in composition. For the most part, electronic mail correspondences led to phone conversations, initial meetings, and IRB interviews. These conversations provided a broad overview of the ways southern California writing teachers approach the study of film to develop critical thinking skills that are central to academic writing and literacy.



From this relatively small population of writing teachers, I selected case studies for classroom observations.

### *Classroom Observations*

In qualitative studies, observations enable researchers to witness the here-and-now experience that the participants have contextualized into “a reconstruction of the past, an interpretation of the present, and a prediction of the future” (Lincoln & Guba, p. 273). In this study, the observations captured the phenomenon of film in composition on its own terms – in the writing classroom (paraphrase, Lincoln & Guba, p. 273). This methodology was primarily important to answering the research questions – in particular, the second question. The observations helped me identify and analyze the critical frameworks the participants apply in their composition courses.

Like the participant-selection process, I formed a list of criteria relevant to selecting case studies. I was interested in case participants that

- Integrate film into writing course material,
- Work toward critical thinking for academic literacy,
- Contain fifteen to twenty-seven students, and
- Have a diversified student population.

The first two criteria reiterate qualifications for soliciting participants; the latter two set parameters on the kind of classroom selected for the study. The rationale for setting these parameters was to ensure that class size would not alter a teacher’s effectiveness in the classroom. Enrollment between these numbers is, for the most part, considered standard. As for the diversified student population, I was interested in classrooms that would

demonstrate how the study of film is applicable to a variety of students. In this qualitative study, the data collected and analyzed from the classroom observations helped me begin triangulating the information gathered from the teacher interviews.

During the participant-selection process, I formed research partnerships/relationships with writing practitioners who also shared my enthusiasm for understanding film in composition (Maxwell, p. 84). Six first-year composition teachers volunteered to participate as cases, agreeing to, at least, a one-week observation. (Refer to Appendix B - Teacher Informed Consent.) The length of an observation was determined by the amount of time deemed necessary for a practitioner to teach a film-writing unit in their course. With the help of the participants, I obtained the permission and cooperation of their department chairs to proceed with the study. IRB approved classroom observations were conducted from April to November 2006. During each observation, I varied my seating choice to make my presence less conspicuous in the classroom. I also kept field notes on classroom environments, teaching practices, student responses, and classroom dialogues. These notes were transcribed and summarized after each visit and were generally returned via electronic mail to the cases for their review. While conducting each case, the transcripts were valuable for member checking and clarifying the use of film in writing instruction (LeCompte & Preissle, p. 285). Additional member checking was completed through the case reports, summaries/narratives of the research sites featured in the study. (See Appendix B - Case Report Consent Form.) The reports were provided for participant review and were signed in January-February 2007. Through these documents, I began forming the connections between theory and practice – in particular, the application of various critical

methodologies (e.g., narrative, cultural, cinematic, and rhetorical analyses) in the writing classroom.

Of the six cases completed for the study, two are not relevant to the discussion of film in composition at the two-year college. The cases removed from the study were conducted at four-year institutions. The first of the two cases held a full-time lecturer position at a private college. As mentioned earlier, this instructor was eliminated from the study to focus the analysis of data collected from community college writing teachers. Unlike the first case, the second case primarily teaches at the community college level. The classroom observation with this instructor, however, took place at a public university. For this reason, this participant (Dr. Grace Leigh) remains a part of the study. Her teacher interview provides supplemental data on the application of film study in composition.

The four remaining case studies were conducted at various community colleges in and near Los Angeles County. These cases have diverse demographics, course assignments, and teaching styles. (Refer to Appendix D - Film in Composition: The Participants.) During the classroom observations, each case was scheduled in a “smart classroom,” which generally consisted of a computer console, a TV monitor, DVD and VHS equipment, a multimedia projector, a sound system, and a manual projector screen. To provide a context for the cross-case reports reviewed later in this chapter (and in subsequent chapters), I outline the cases here.

*Case #1: Clara Bautista*

Clara Bautista teaches various levels of first-year composition. During the study, her teaching appointment included a transfer-level, freshman composition course. At twenty-one students, the class consisted of seven males and fourteen females – seventeen of which were Latinos. The enrollment also included two Caucasians, one African American, and one Asian American. Their ages ranged from eighteen to twenty-two. The class met twice a week over a 75-minute period. Like most freshman composition courses, this class focuses on preparing students for the academic writing they will encounter in advanced freshman composition and at the four-year college or university. The course is designed to hone the critical thinking skills students have developed in secondary English and language arts classes and in basic writing or ESL courses at the community college. During the term, Bautista instructed her students in textual analysis, process writing, and library research and research writing.

In creating the course schedule for freshman composition, Bautista works from student knowledge and experience to foster cultural and academic literacies. Bautista's course is organized into thematic units exploring the nature of private and public relationships (e.g., *Love and Romance*, *Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation*, and *Human/Civil Rights*). In a sixteen-week semester, students complete four essays, three of which are expository papers. A short research essay is assigned at the end of the term. The first three writing assignments are organized into one three-week unit and two four-week units. It is during this part of the semester that Bautista screens three films (e.g., *Notting Hill* [1999], *Normal* [2003], and *Iron-Jawed Angels* [2004]). She couples these films with

- A cultural or a critical reading (e.g., "Why marriages fail" [1999], "Gender role behaviors and attitudes" [2003], and "Three types of resistance to oppression" [1985]) and
- A selection of short fiction (e.g., "Vows" [2004], "What kind of king" [2005], "Thank heaven for little boys" [2003], "Women are just better" [2000]).

For each reading, her students complete a set of questions (e.g., examining the construction of the text) and a journal (e.g., focused free writing on the narrative themes or social-cultural issues in the text). These assignments facilitate close readings and help students understand the elements of composition and argument that make for successful and effective writing (paraphrase, 20S~2). They also prepare students to participate in classroom dialogues and to address the writing prompts Bautista assigns at the beginning of each unit.

Bautista's application of film study is best described as a content-analysis approach, focusing on the narrative and the cultural elements of the text (20I~1). In freshman composition, she assigns feature films to foster close readings and academic writing. A cultural or critical article like Anne Roiphe's "Why marriages fail" is an interpretative framework for exploring love and romance in Julie Showalter's "Vows" and Roger Michell's *Notting Hill*. In this first four-week unit of the course, Bautista and her students focus on the narrative themes and social-cultural issues involved in private relationships. Students share their personal knowledge and experience on relationships. At the same time, the class collaboratively generates an academic discourse for interpreting and analyzing Showalter's piece and Michell's film. The students use Roiphe's article to generate a list of terms. Discourse like *the myth of marriage, cultural*

*changes*, and *self-discipline* along with *theme*, *plot*, *conflict*, *characterization*, *context*, and *point of view* are defined and applied to “Vows” and *Notting Hill*, two narratives about couples who struggle to maintain a relationship amidst a host of outside pressures. Classroom dialogues on literature and film are an opportunity to transition students from narrative to idea to argument. Students clarify their impressions, offer their own interpretations, and test out their own arguments of the text(s). These collaborative sessions facilitate close readings, synthesis, and later academic writing. The final essay of this unit requires students to use “Why marriages fail” as a base to discuss “Vows” or *Notting Hill*. In an argumentative paper, students complete a close reading of why the characters in Showalter’s or Michell’s text will or will not remain married. The assignment requires students to negotiate the meaning of characterization and conflict and to make connections between texts.

#### *Case #2: Dr. Madeline Bowman*

Like Bautista, Dr. Madeline Bowman also teaches first-year composition at the same two-year college. At the time of the study, her teaching appointment included a transfer-level, advanced freshman composition course. This class consisted of fifteen students – five of them male and ten of them female. As was the case with the student population in Bautista’s class, the enrollment in Bowman’s course included a large number of Latinos (twelve students). Also in the class were two Caucasians and one Asian American. The students’ ages ranged from eighteen to twenty-five. During the study, this class met twice a week over a 75-minute period. As a second-semester writing course, this section of advanced freshman composition was a part of the honors program

at this community college. To qualify for the course, students earned a 3.2 cumulative grade point average in all transferable courses and were enrolled as full-time students. In this honors section, Bowman focuses on writing and reading, critical thinking skills, and library research and research writing. Portfolio assessment is an important component of the course, emphasizing the role of re-vision and active learning in composition.

For the most part, Bowman's course draws on student lived experiences to discuss the themes and issues in a set of historical texts and literary works. The course focuses on American history – its longstanding traditions and cultural issues. Although advanced freshman composition is organized into thematic units on *Identities*, *American Dreams*, *Images of Gender and Family*, and *Justice and Civil Liberties*, Bowman modifies the schedule to address pressing contemporary issues (9S~1; 9I~2, 4). In this sixteen-week semester, Bowman's students complete two in-class essays and four take-home papers. Two of the four latter papers are research essays. To prepare for academic writing, Bowman's students keep reading journals, summarizing and exploring ideas in the text. The purpose of the journal is to record responses and reflections, raise questions, and make connections between and among texts. Film is integrated into the course as a primary text. Bowman screens a number of short documentaries or excerpts from documentaries (e.g., *In the White Man's Image* [1992], *Not for Ourselves Alone: The Story of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony* [1999], *Deadly Deception: General Electric, Nuclear Weapons and Our Environment* [1991], etc.) along with assigning a feature-length film (e.g., *To Kill a Mockingbird* [1962], *Mi Familia* [1995], and *Bowling for Columbine* [2002]) as at-home 'reading' for a film presentation and individual report at the end of the term.

Similar to Bautista's approach to film in composition, Bowman's application also focuses on content analysis, narrative and cultural analyses (9I~2). In advanced freshman composition, Bowman includes documentaries and feature-length films to facilitate close readings and to develop a critical academic literacy. Throughout the term, the chapter introductions to the thematic units in *Creating America* (e.g., *Identities*, *American dreams*, *Images of gender and family*, *Justice and civil liberties*) serve as critical articles, framing student responses to film and to different works of literature (e.g., "A tapestry of hope," "In the land of the free"). To prepare for the final exam, Bowman assigns a film presentation and an individual report. The feature films are texts that facilitate a thematic review of the course. For this one-week unit, Bowman's students work in small groups to present the ways a movie like *Mi Familia*, the story of three generations of the Sanchez family, illustrates the narrative themes and social-cultural issues discussed in advanced freshman composition. During the presentation of Gregory Nava's film, students apply the academic discourse of the critical articles. Terms like *immigration* and *the American Dream* are used alongside literary concepts like *theme*, *characterization*, *conflict*, and *point of view*. The assignment encourages students to work collaboratively, making connections between and among texts. It also challenges students to ponder American history and its current reflections in contemporary life. Immigration is a pressing concern in the United States – particularly, in southern California. As a film, *Mi Familia* is a kind of literary text contributing to the argument on the immigration issue.



*Case #3: Dr. Anne Bratton-Hayes*

Unlike the first two cases, the third case is located at another two-year college in or near Los Angeles County. At the time of the study, Dr. Anne Bratton-Hayes, a first-year composition instructor, taught two sections of basic writing. Although this course is non-transferable to four-year institutions, students in the class do earn credit toward an associate's degree. It is designed to hone the writing and critical thinking skills necessary for freshman and advanced freshman composition courses at the community college. Like other basic writing courses, Bratton-Hayes' class emphasizes process-writing instruction and, in particular, the transition from personal to public forms of writing. During the semester, Bratton-Hayes and her students met twice a week for two hours. At twenty-two students, the class included thirteen males and nine females – eleven of which were Latinos. The enrollment also included ten Caucasians and one African American. The age range of the student population was from eighteen to thirty. Unlike the former cases, many of the students in this course were nontraditional students, holding full-time positions and taking evening classes.

Integral to basic writing instruction at this community college, Bratton-Hayes reviews the writing process and introduces students to different modes of rhetorical analysis. Over a seventeen-week term, the class includes five writing units: a prewriting strategies task, an analysis paper, an observation essay, a summary-rhetorical analysis paper, and a short research assignment. Through selected chapters in *The Allyn & Bacon guide to writing* (2005) and *Beyond words: Reading and writing in a visual age* (2005), Bratton-Hayes and her students explore the function and structure of different forms of composition (2S~6-8). Her students complete a variety of in-class and take-home writing

assignments: reading questions, freewriting viewer responses, creative writing papers, short analytical papers, and a final exam. As a part of the course, Bratton-Hayes includes genre films as texts. Movie and movie clips from *Strangers on a Train* (1951), *Psycho* (1960), *Rope* (1948), *Vertigo* (1958), *Marnie* (1964), and *North by Northwest* (1959) are read and analyzed to examine the ways aural-visual texts are constructed and form arguments like written texts.

While the first two cases focus on the narrative and the cultural aspects of film, Bratton-Hayes takes a cinematic-and-rhetorical approach to the study of film in composition (21~22). To demonstrate the principles of writer, audience, and purpose, Bratton-Hayes applies the suspense horror genre as a form of composition. For the first half of the term, she and her students hold an on-going dialogue on the film genre as lived experience. They share personal responses to contemporary films like *Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>* (1980), *The Sixth Sense* (1999), *The Blair Witch Project* (1999), *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (2003), *The Village* (2004), and *Hostel* (2005). As a class, Bratton-Hayes and her students identify and classify the codes and conventions of the genre (e.g., *villains* who pursue *victims* for known and unknown reasons). They compare and contrast modern conceptions of the suspense horror film with its past forms – in particular, the work of Alfred Hitchcock. About mid-semester, Bratton-Hayes shifts the dialogues on social practice to an analysis of the ways this film genre communicates. This analysis begins with the exploration of how “genre creates strong reader expectations and places specific demands on the writer” (Ramage et al., p. 54). The class reviews the codes and conventions of writing and argument. These principles of composition are extended to the study of film genre. Bratton-Hayes and her students examine Hitchcock’s films to

understand how the filmmaker, like the writer, also creates and satisfies viewer expectations. It is during this part of the term that Bratton-Hayes introduces a four-week unit on the cinematic and rhetorical elements of film. “Moving pictures: Writing to tell stories,” a chapter on film analysis, terms, and concepts, extends the academic discourse students have formed from the beginning of the term. Students learn how *casting*, *lighting*, *music*, and *mise-en-scene* influence the meaning of aural-visual texts. As a final writing assignment, Bratton-Hayes has created an essay exam that requires students to articulate the ways Hitchcock communicates argument in a film clip from *North by Northwest*, a movie about espionage and mistaken identity.

#### *Case #4: Dr. Eric Fischer*

Like Bratton-Hayes, the final case is located at another neighboring community college in or near Los Angeles County. At the time of the study, Dr. Eric Fischer, a first-year writing professor, taught a transfer-level, freshman composition course. This class was the largest in the study. It consisted of twenty-seven students: thirteen males and fourteen females. Twenty of these students were Latinos; five were Asian Americans; and two were Caucasians. Their ages ranged from eighteen to twenty-five. This class met once a week over a four-hour period in two classrooms: the first, a “smart classroom” where genre films were screened, and the second, a regular classroom where Fischer and his students would meet for discussions. As a first-semester writing course, this freshman composition class is designed to develop the critical thinking skill students need to matriculate to higher-level composition courses. It guides students through the writing process and fosters a critical academic literacy. Like the second case in the study,

Fischer also applies portfolio assessment to emphasize the importance of writing convention: organization, development, and correctness.

In an effort to connect student knowledge with school knowledge, Fischer's course schedule includes a variety of texts and assignments. The class is arranged into four units. The first unit presents strategies for writing and reading. Fischer assigns "A catalog of invention strategies" and "A catalog of reading strategies" along with other selected readings (e.g., Tobias Wolff's "On being a real westerner" and Anatasia Toufexis' "Love: The right chemistry") from *The St. Martin's guide to writing* (2004). The second unit applies the strategies learned from the first to read and write about a longer written text, Sesshu Foster's novel *Atomik aztex* (2006). During this unit, Fischer and his students also read "Explaining a concept" from *St. Martin's*. They use this second reading as a guide to explore the concept of alternate realities in Foster's text. The third unit incorporates the strategies learned in the first two units. Fischer and his students look at the principles of composition in the western genre. The class reads Cormac McCarthy's *All the pretty horses* (1992), Billy Bob Thornton's *All the Pretty Horses* (2001), Sam Peckinpah's *The Wild Bunch* (1969), and Ang Lee's *Brokeback Mountain* (2005). They explore the thematic convention of trespassing in these genre texts. In the final unit of the course, Fischer and his students focus on library research and research writing. Selected chapters from *St Martin's* are read and discussed. Students have the choice of their own topics for this assignment. Like the first case, Fischer's course assignments focus on expository and research writing. Throughout the term, Fischer assigns reading quizzes, in-class writing and activities, and short papers to

prepare students for writing assignments. These items are submitted with take-home writing for portfolio assessment (18S~1).

Fischer's application of film in composition is comparable to Bratton-Hayes' approach to the suspense horror film. In the third unit of his course, Fischer and his students focus on the cinematic and the rhetorical aspects of the western genre (18I~6; 180~12). According to Fischer, both novels and films are kinds of composition (18I~4). To illustrate the general principles of writing and argument, Fischer couples McCarthy's novel with three western films. These readings make up a four-week unit on the study of genre and rhetoric. As a part of the unit, the class explores the codes and conventions of the western. Fischer's students draw from personal knowledge and experience to define the act of trespassing, a common western convention. They also create a grounded definition of the cowboy code based on the readings presented in the course. These initial discussions introduce the multiple elements of film genre: *plot*, *characters*, *setting*, *themes*, *iconography*, and *cinematic style*. They also lead to conversations on *casting*, *acting style*, *costuming*, and *props*, the rhetoric of film that creates and shapes argument. This academic discourse cues and constrains student response. The study of genre enables Fischer and his students to compare and contrast the representation of codes and conventions – in particular, representations of ideology in film texts. The class explores the image of the cowboy and its relation to codes of masculinity, the idea of love as a physiological process or as a cultural construct, and the gendered constitutions of love and longing in relationships. The unit culminates in a paper on the act of trespassing in the western.

As a summary of this discussion, Table 2: *An Overview of the Cases* (below) provides the most salient and comparable aspects of these cases. In this study, two teaching practices emerge as important film-writing approaches. Cases #1 and #2, Bautista and Bowman, respectively, illustrate the study of film as content, a narrative-cultural analysis of film.

Table 2

*An Overview of the Cases*

| <b>Cases</b>  | <b>Film-Study Approach</b> | <b>Course Readings</b>                                                                                                                           | <b>Academic Discourse</b>                                                                                                                               |
|---------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Bautista      | Film as Content            | <p>“Why Marriages Fail”</p> <p>“Vows”</p> <p><i>Notting Hill</i></p>                                                                             | The Nature of Private Relationships: Myth of marriage, cultural changes, self disciple, theme, plot, characterization, conflict, context, point of view |
| Bowman        | Film as Content            | <p>Chapter introductions from <i>Creating America</i></p> <p>“In the Land of the Free”</p> <p>“A Tapestry of Hope”</p> <p><i>Mi Familia</i></p>  | The Complexity of the Immigrant Experience: Immigration, American dream, theme, characterization, conflict, point of view                               |
| Bratton-Hayes | Film Genre in Composition  | <p>“Moving Pictures: Writing to Tell Stories”</p> <p><i>North by Northwest</i></p> <p><i>Rope</i></p> <p><i>Marnie</i></p> <p><i>Vertigo</i></p> | Horror Suspense Genre / Filmmaker as Writer: Casting, lighting, music, mise-en-scene                                                                    |
| Fischer       | Film Genre in Composition  | <p><i>All the Pretty Horses</i> (novel and film)</p> <p><i>The Wild Bunch</i></p> <p><i>Brokeback Mountain</i></p>                               | Western Film Genre: Plot, characterization, setting, themes, iconography, cinematic style, casting, acting style, costuming, props                      |

Table 2 shows that these participants assign cultural and critical articles, literary works, and feature films to discuss narrative themes and social-cultural issues. The next

two participants, Cases #3 and #4, demonstrate the study of film genre in composition, a cinematic-rhetorical analysis of film. Bratton-Hayes and Fischer work from a selection of genre films, film essays, and literary works to illustrate the general principles of writing and argument. As presented on the table, both sets of cases generate academic discourse related to the film-writing pedagogy studied in their classrooms. In the reports, which I discuss later, readers will find that each approach to film study is a distinct writing pedagogy being practiced at selected two-year colleges in southern California.

In the end, the purpose of conducting observations was to capture the phenomenon of film in composition in its own environment. This study documents the teaching practices of four writing practitioners teaching at the community college level in southern California. Through this method of data collection, I began to understand what a small group of postsecondary writing teachers ‘do’ in their classrooms. I learned what critical frameworks the participants rely on to include film in composition and why these methodologies are effective and applicable to a variety of students.

### *Artifacts*

As a part of the design of *Film in composition*, artifacts were another method of data collection. According to Lincoln and Guba, artifacts provide direct information that is, in most cases, noninterventional and characterized by stable and independent language (pp. 198-199, 280). In the study, this source of information was classified into three categories: course documents, student writing, and student surveys. An assortment of class materials was collected from most – if not, all – of the participants. These items included course syllabi, reading assignments, film selections, and writing prompts. In

addition to these class materials, student writing was collected from the cases. Student surveys were administered with the help of the case participants.

Of course, to work with the students in the observed classrooms, I followed IRB protocol. I invited students over the age of eighteen to participate. Like the writing practitioners, the student participants were informed of their rights as members of the study. They also signed consent forms and received pseudonyms. (See Appendix B - Student Informed Consent.) The student writing featured in chapters four and five are from a selection of sixty-four students who volunteered to participate. The student surveys, which are discussed in chapter six, are coded responses from forty-seven students who completed the survey. As a part of the study's qualitative research design, this collection of artifacts helped address the second research question on the kinds of critical frameworks teachers apply in the classroom and the third research question on the implications of these frameworks in postsecondary writing instruction. These documents confirmed how teachers hone critical thinking skills that are important to academic literacy and how students respond to the study of film in composition.

### *Course Documents*

During teacher interviews and classroom observations, the participants generally provided course materials for my review. These data were significant to the study. They illustrated the different ways the group of writing practitioners includes film in first-year composition. Course syllabi were studied to examine writing objectives and to understand how film study is integrated into a course schedule. This information was especially intriguing to me. Time is important in the postsecondary writing classroom.



Knowing how to organize a unit on film enables practitioners to organize the schedule in constructive ways. As a part of this analysis, reading assignments and film selections were also examined to note the connections between and among written and aural-visual texts. This analysis revealed how the writing practitioners couple film with course readings. In the classroom, feature and genre films illustrate the themes, the social-cultural issues, the codes and conventions, and the representation of ideological arguments. Each reading selection informs critical response: the application of interpretative frameworks and academic discourses. My examination of reading selections led to the analysis of additional course assignments. Recognizing that the course readings were important to accessing the written text and to generating student writing, I also collected writing prompts to understand how the practitioners implement film study according to the critical methodologies (e.g., narrative, cultural, cinematic, and rhetorical analyses) presented in chapter two and earlier in this chapter. Taken as a whole, these documents revealed an array of approaches to film in composition. They helped me triangulate the data gathered and analyzed from teacher interviews and classroom observations, addressing Research Questions #2 and #3.

### *Student Writing*

During the study, a sample of student writing was also collected from the professors and instructors participating as cases. Students who signed consent forms offered their writing for analysis. These documents were important to the study of film in composition. I consulted student papers to confirm the ways the cases incorporated film in writing instruction and to note how these applications of film study were beneficial to

the development of critical thinking. For this analysis, I examined drafts of student writing and considered in-class activities the students completed to generate ideas and to form their own arguments on film. Throughout the classroom observations, the cases and I discussed student critical responses to film and written texts. The identification of strong writing performances was not grounded in the grades students received in the course but in the key moments when the cases and I noted student writing illustrating the application of different critical methodologies at work. Table 3: *A Review of Student Writing* (on the next page) provides an overview of the information presented in this discussion.

Table 3 shows that the academic writing the first two cases assigned in their composition courses required students to explore narrative themes on different social-cultural issues. These cases took a narrative-cultural approach to film in composition. The writing featured in the study focused on the nature of private relationships and the complexity of the immigrant experience, respectively. The prompts Bautista and Bowman assigned produced different forms of academic writing. In the first case, the four-week unit on Roiphe's "Why marriages fail," Showalter's "Vows," and Michell's *Notting Hill* culminated in a three-page argumentative essay studying film as content. Students pondered the author's/filmmaker's stance on marriage and generated close readings, projecting whether a set of characters in the short story or the feature film would remain married.

Table 3

*An Overview of Student Writing*

| Cases         | Film-Study Approach       | Academic Writing                                         | Essays Completed | Essential Texts                                                                                                                      | Student Approaches                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|---------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Bautista      | Film as Content           | Take home – 3-4 page essay on marriage success / failure | 10               | “Why Marriages Fail”<br><i>Notting Hill</i>                                                                                          | The Nature of Private Relationships:<br><br>Six essays on why marriage will succeed<br><br>Four essays on why marriage will fail                                                                             |
| Bowman        | Film as Content           | Take home – 2 page report on course themes               | 4                | Chapter introductions from <i>Creating America</i><br><br>“In the Land of the Free”<br><br>“A Tapestry of Hope”<br><i>Mi Familia</i> | The Complexity of the Immigrant Experience:<br><br>American dream, civil rights, immigration<br><br>Characterization and conflict social equality<br><br>Relate to current political dialogue on immigration |
| Bratton-Hayes | Film Genre in Composition | In class – 3-4 page Hitchcock essay                      | 19               | <i>North by Northwest</i><br><br><i>Rope</i><br><br><i>Marnie</i><br><br><i>Vertigo</i>                                              | The Horror Suspense Film / Filmmaker as Writer:<br><br>Screenwriting<br><br>Character types<br><br>Musical score<br><br>Visual composition                                                                   |
| Fischer       | Film Genre in Composition | Take home – 4-6 page essay on a western convention       | 5                | <i>All the Pretty Horses</i><br><br><i>The Wild Bunch</i><br><br><i>Brokeback Mountain</i>                                           | The Act of Trespassing in the Western:<br><br>Four write sections on different films<br><br>One writes in points (territorial, emotional, and physical)                                                      |

Of the nineteen students who participated in the study, fourteen submitted essays. Ten students completed the assignment pairing Roiphe's and Michell's texts. Six students composed arguments working with the characterizations provided by *Notting Hill*. These students believed Will Thacker and Anna Scott, the protagonists, would remain married because of their ability to remain flexible and adaptable to the pressures of work and family life. The other four students questioned Michell's text, finding the characters unrealistic in their attempts to have a relationship. For these students, Will and Anna may have a genuine love for one another but ultimately suffer from poor communication, cultural differences, outside pressures, and extra-marital affairs. From this latter group of essays, one student's writing was selected to illustrate the study of film as content in a first-semester freshman composition course.

The second case, a one-week unit reviewing the narrative themes and social-cultural issues discussed in advanced freshman composition, required students to complete a two-page report. Table 3 shows that Bowman's film presentation assignment offered students a selection of movies (e.g., *Bowling for Columbine*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and *Mi Familia*) and readings from *Creating America* to prepare for the final exam. For this study, the group presenting on Gregory Nava's film, *Mi Familia*, was selected to demonstrate the application of film as content. Of the six members in the group, four students consented to participate in the study. Their reports are reflective of the writing students completed in the other groups. This writing is informal, exploratory, and focused. In their reports, Bowman's students discuss the American dream, civil rights, and the immigration issue as narrative themes explored in *Mi Familia*. The students make connections between and among the readings discussed in the course.

They analyze Nava's characterizations and conflicts as arguments for social equality and relate these arguments to the current political dialogues on immigration. Excerpts from various student writing are analyzed for their application of film as content and their compelling arguments on film.

Unlike the former set of cases, the following set of participants assigned academic writing on the codes and conventions and the rhetoric of film. These cases took a cinematic-rhetorical approach to film in composition. As a part of both writing assignments, the cases required their students to analyze the ways film communicates ideological messages. Once again, Table 3 shows that the prompts in both courses produced different forms of academic writing. In Bratton-Hayes' basic writing course, a four-week unit on cinematic technique concluded with an in-class final exam. This writing focused on the rhetoric of film in the suspense horror movie. Students viewed a six-minute film clip from *North by Northwest* and analyzed the genre techniques Hitchcock uses to create suspense and argument. Of the twenty students who participated in the study, nineteen students completed the final exam. For the assignment, Bratton-Hayes' students referred to the codes and conventions of Hitchcock movies. In the table, I summarize that the class compared the stylistic features of the clip to those in *Rope*, *Marnie*, and *Vertigo*. One student likened Hitchcock's work to the films of M. Night Shyamalan, another director discussed in the course. To construct arguments on film, the students noted the common elements of Hitchcock's scriptwriting (e.g., plot conflicts and witty dialogue), character types (e.g., handsome leading men and sophisticated cool blondes), musical score (e.g., the tone and mood of this film selection), and visual composition (e.g., color, costuming, and setting). These essays presented Hitchcock as a

writer with a signature style. The students constructed compact critical responses to the film clip. Excerpts from a selection of final exams are analyzed to exemplify the study of film genre in composition.

In Fischer's freshman composition course, a four-week unit on the western genre is brought to a close with a four-to-six page essay. As presented in Table 3, this academic writing called students to explore the act of trespassing as a western convention. Using *All the Pretty Horses*, *The Wild Bunch*, and *Brokeback Mountain* as texts, Fischer's students incorporated a discussion on the codes of the western into an argument on the ideological representations of trespassing. Of the fourteen students participating in the study, five students submitted essays for data analysis. These papers focused on defining the word *trespassing* as an act and as a thematic convention. For the most part, this group completed individual and multiple text analyses. In the table, I present the ways two groups of students structured their essays. The first group of students organized their papers into sections (i.e., one on each film) and provided extended examples on the different ways these westerns illustrate the genre's convention. The second group, consisting of one student, developed an argument around different forms of trespassing, using an extended example from each film. This paper contained blossoming paragraphs on territorial (crossing borders), emotional (relationships and love), and physical (fighting and killing) acts of trespassing and included an additional discussion on the forgivable and unforgivable acts of trespassing in each text. This academic writing is presented as an illustration of one student's response to the study of film genre in composition.

By and large, this population of community college students reveals in their writing the development of an emerging academic literacy. The students applied different critical methodologies to read, understand, interpret, and analyze feature and genre films. They also used various academic discourses to analyze how these film texts communicate. In the process, students were engaged in textual analysis and argument. They asserted themselves as readers and writers of film. These documents illustrated how a selection of students worked toward the goals of first-year composition.

### *Student Surveys*

In addition to course documents and student writing, I also conducted a student survey. This survey was relevant to answering the third research question on the implication of incorporating film study in first-year composition. The instrument, for the most part, consisted of seven open-ended questions on the effectiveness of film study in first-year composition. (See Appendix E - Student Survey Questions.) Of the four cases featured in the study, three practitioners (Bautista, Bratton-Hayes, and Fischer) advised completing the survey in the classroom. Upon their suggestion, I conducted these surveys on the last day of the observation, distributing and collecting the instrument myself. Only students who signed consent forms responded to the survey. The surveys for the fourth case were distributed for completion as an at-home assignment. These surveys were collected by the instructor and mailed to my home address. For this case, I received a smaller selection of student responses. Of the fifty-four instruments distributed, forty-seven surveys were returned and contributed to the study. During analysis, the surveys for each case were organized into a matrix to note the patterns and

themes regarding the students' responses to each question. (See Appendices F through I - Cases #1 through #4 - Student Surveys.)

As a part of the study, the survey was relevant to understanding how students perceive the use of film in the writing classroom. The instrument elicited an insightful array of student responses. First, the students appreciated the inclusion of film in composition. They believed the film texts gave variety to the course and accommodated their learning styles. For some, the decision to enroll in particular writing courses was attributed to the cases' innovative teaching methods. Second, the student responses also indicated that the feature and genre films extended personal knowledge. Film in composition offered new ways of learning and seeing. The students learned that films have themes and messages. They discovered that filmmakers have methods of creating and shaping arguments. In the classroom, the study of film raised their awareness of social-cultural and ideological issues. Third, the students also expressed that they were engaged in reading film as literature or film as composition. The selection of feature and genre films motivated them to read and revisit the written texts in the course. It also facilitated analytical thinking. The pedagogical approaches helped students to analyze narrative themes and characters as well as rhetorical style and structure. The students recognized that the application of film study was intended to illustrate these concepts and to access the written text, including their own.

On the whole, the collection of artifacts was an important source of information. It provided additional data regarding the use of film in writing instruction. This collection of documents extended my own analysis of film in composition – particularly, my understanding of teaching practices, learning philosophies, critical frameworks,



academic discourse, and course objectives. Through the course documents, student writing, and student surveys, I was presented another overview of the film-writing pedagogies applied to develop student critical thinking and academic writing. More importantly, I was able to investigate how students respond to this writing instruction. The latter information illustrated the potential of film study in writing instruction.

In this dissertation, the methods of data collection included teacher interviews, classroom observations, and a collection of artifacts. Table 4: *Research Questions and Sources of Data* (below) presents the total number of data collected and analyzed throughout the study and the number of each used to answer Research Questions #2 and #3: *What critical frameworks do practitioners apply to hone critical thinking skills that are essential for academic literacy? What are the implications of incorporating an aural-visual medium like film into the writing classroom?*

Table 4

*Research Questions and Sources of Data*

| <b>Sources of Data</b> | <b>Total</b> | <b>Research Question #2</b> | <b>Research Question #3</b> |
|------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Teacher Interviews     | 19           | 17                          | 15                          |
| Classroom Observations | 24           | 20                          | 10                          |
| Case Reports           | 4            | 4                           | -                           |
| Course Syllabi         | 23           | 21                          | 21                          |
| Course Readings        | 63           | 19                          | 63                          |
| Film Selections        | 72           | 15                          | 72                          |
| Discussion Questions   | 3            | 3                           | 3                           |
| Film Handouts          | 4            | 4                           | -                           |
| Writing Prompts        | 17           | 17                          | 4                           |
| Student Papers         | 52           | 44                          | 8                           |
| Student Surveys        | 52           | -                           | 47                          |

Through each method of data collection, I worked at understanding the application of film in college writing instruction. From this data collection and analysis, I constructed a series of reports, a cross-case analysis of two critical frameworks (e.g., narrative-cultural and cinematic-rhetorical analyses) and an examination of the consequences of film study in college writing instruction. The methods of constructing these reports are discussed in the next section.

### Methods of Data Analysis

Throughout the study, an inductive analysis was applied to all collected data. The transcriptions of teacher interviews and classroom observations were summarized and coded into categories following a film-in-composition heuristic. A narrative, cultural, cinematic, and rhetorical approach to film study guided my analysis of the various teaching practices. I kept a reflective journal and completed a matrix on each critical methodology. This analysis helped classify the participants in different ways and led to matrices on each case participant (Miles & Huberman, pp. 239-244). Based on these initial journal entries and participant matrices, individual case reports were constructed. The reports applied a “thick description” (Ryle, 1971; Geertz, 1973) of the classroom (e.g., applying interview and observation field notes, course syllabi, handouts, etc.) and the research site (e.g., presenting a profile of the college, the writing program, the courses offered, and the student population) (Lincoln & Guba, p. 327). This data analysis enabled me to understand each case on its own terms and to note how the cases compared with other participants.

To determine how the critical methodologies would be paired, I revised matrices on the participants were generated to explore new patterns and themes. During this time of the study, I returned to the opening chapters of the dissertation proposal and reviewed the scholarship and research on film in composition to guide my analysis. Two teaching practices emerged in the study: the application of film as content and the application of film genre in composition. The construction of cross-case analyses was grounded in forming propositions and working hypotheses that explained the use of film in the participants' classrooms. Once again, this analysis was important (a) to understanding the similarities and differences between and among the participants and (b) to understanding the connections between theory and practice. It facilitated comparisons and contrasts among the cases – specifically into thematic sections on film selections, critical viewing methods, classroom dialogues, writing prompts, and student papers.

### *The Reports*

Eventually, the process of data analysis was followed by report writing: a cross-case analysis of each critical framework and an examination of the implications of each writing approach. In this dissertation, the reports present a theory – grounded in the data – on the application of film study in postsecondary writing instruction. These reports present a glimpse at the writing practitioners' teaching philosophies and classroom practices. The application of their critical methodologies is contextualized in the data gathered from the practitioners who apply similar teaching methods. The approaches to film study are framed within the current scholarship and research on film in composition.

Chapter four, “Film as content: A narrative-cultural analysis of film in first-year composition,” covers the first of two cross-case analyses. The data consists of course handouts; reading assignments; student papers; scholarship and research on film-writing pedagogy and the study of film and literature; and my impressions. The chapter presents the rationale, objectives, strategies, and academic discourse of the study of film as content. The study consists of twelve participants. (See Appendix J - A Narrative-Cultural Analysis of Film: The Participants.) It also introduces two cases holding teaching appointments at the same community college in or near Los Angeles County. In first-year composition, Bautista and Bowman take a narrative-cultural approach to illustrate how feature films, like works of fiction and creative nonfiction, tell stories; to access other written texts; to delve into multiple interpretations and explore different subject positions; and to explore social-cultural themes and political issues. To undertake the goals of this teaching practice, the practitioners include a variety of critical articles, feature films, literary texts, and writing assignments. They work to broaden the personal schemata of their students, encouraging them to apply academic discourse and to think academically about texts with which they are familiar. The chapter compares and contrasts the cases’ teaching approaches, looking at film selections, critical viewing methods, classroom dialogues, and writing prompts. The following section presents an analysis of student writing, how a variety of students demonstrate the application of narrative-cultural analysis. In the conclusion, I examine the results of these teaching practices as classrooms that are engaged in social-cultural issues and content analysis. Both practitioners foster the critical thinking skills that are important to a cultural academic literacy.

Chapter five, “Film genre in composition: A cinematic-rhetorical analysis of film in first-year composition,” focuses on the next cross-case analysis. The report includes data from course handouts; reading assignments; student papers; scholarship and research on film-writing pedagogy and the study of film genre; and my impressions. The chapter examines the rationale, objectives, strategies, and academic discourse of this teaching approach and offers case studies of two writing practitioners. Like chapter four, the cases are contextualized in the teaching practices of additional participants teaching at neighboring community colleges in and near Los Angeles County. (See Appendix K - A Cinematic-Rhetorical Analysis of Film: The Participants.) In the writing classroom, Bratton-Hayes and Fischer apply a cinematic-rhetorical analysis to present film as a form of composition; to explore how films communicate; to study textual construction; to demonstrate the broad connections among film, writing, and argument; and to uncover ideological purpose in the film text. To address these goals, the practitioners take a broad approach to the study of film genre. They explore the codes, conventions, and rhetoric of film. They include a selection of critical articles, movie reviews, and works of fiction. In this chapter, I compare and contrast the cases’ approaches to film selections, critical viewing, classroom dialogues, and writing prompts. A section on student writing illustrates how a variety of students apply a cinematic-rhetorical approach to film. In the final section, I evaluate the ways in which both cases address writing course goals and foster the critical thinking skills that are essential to academic literacy.

Chapter six, “The implications in focus: The impact of film study in first-year composition,” explores the consequences of taking a narrative-cultural or a cinematic-rhetorical approach to film in the writing classroom. It evaluates the critical

methodologies discussed in chapters four and five. The data for this report consist of teacher interviews; course syllabi; student surveys; scholarship and research on film-writing pedagogy, cultural studies writing pedagogy, media literacy education, basic writing theory, and literacy studies; and my impressions. The report examines three implications resulting from the study. The first implication considers the influence the application of film and film study has on teaching and learning philosophies. It explores how the application of this aural-visual medium restores the connections between home and school cultures, thereby transforming classroom practices and creating an authentic learning experience. The second implication addresses the importance of film study for the field of composition. It examines the ways in which film works effectively with various teaching approaches in the cultural-studies-based writing classroom to develop critical thinking skills. The third and final implication of this chapter presents how the application of film and film study in writing instruction is integral to the development of twenty-first century literacy skills. It considers the effects of implementing broader conceptions of literacy in first-year composition. The chapter concludes discussing how the study of film in composition is a sound teaching practice for developing the critical thinking skills important to academic literacy and for preparing students as forthcoming members of the social-political world.

The reports presented in this dissertation recognize the teaching practices the participants apply in first-year composition as significant and valuable to the field of composition. They demonstrate that the study of film is an informed teaching practice, offering ways to incorporate film within a cultural studies-media literacy writing paradigm. Through the cross-case analyses, the role of film in composition is made clear.

Postsecondary writing teachers understand how entire films and film clips work in the classroom, how an aural-visual medium like film is incorporated as in-class and take-home reading, how the medium may be paired with written texts, and how film helps generate different kinds of academic writing. More importantly, the reports extend the knowledge and information on film in composition, connecting theory and practice.

### *Validity*

Throughout the study, I took several steps to ensure validity. First, the design of *Film in composition* confirms data by triangulating information from different methods of data collection. My impression of teacher interviews were checked by classroom observations, which were checked, once again, by artifacts like course syllabi, writing prompts, student papers, and student surveys. Each method of data collection corroborated that what I was seeing, hearing, and reading was accurate. Second, member checking was another important element built into the study to ensure credibility. Confirming information during and after teacher interviews, after classroom observations, and through case reports helped support the participants and the accuracy of their teaching practices. Finally, as a part of the study, I also kept an audit trail. This audit trail consisted of (a) an informal day-to-day log of tasks to complete, (b) a three-volume reflexive journal and a collection of handwritten dissertation notebooks recording the progress of the study and presenting the decision-making process that guided the study, and (c) a file that contains evidence of research forms (signed teacher consent forms, student consent forms, and case report forms), interview materials (recorded interviews, transcriptions, and summaries), observation materials (field notes,

transcriptions, and summaries), classroom handouts (course syllabi, reading selections, discussion questions, and writing prompts), student documents (student papers and surveys), and correspondence with advisors (formal and electronic mail letters and proposal and draft comments).

### *Time Frame*

In April 2006, I received permission from my dissertation committee members, the School of Graduate Studies and Research at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, and the Institutional Review Board at IUP to conduct *Film in composition*. To manage the demands of data collection and analysis, I was granted a leave of absence from my teaching appointment at the University of La Verne. I scheduled teacher interviews and classroom observations over the spring, summer, and fall of 2006. I allotted additional time after the study to complete further data analysis. During and after the study, I coded data and wrote up research summaries of interview transcripts, observation transcripts, and student papers; completed individual and cross-case matrices; kept an extensive reflexive journal and a series of handwritten dissertation notebooks; wrote case reports; and met informally with the case participants. The process of data analysis was completed in February 2007. The final reports for the dissertation were drafted from March 2007 to May 2008. The defense took place soon after the dissertation's completion.



## Final Comments

This dissertation explores the use of film in composition. It has examined the rationale for including the study of film in the writing classroom and has reviewed the various analytical frameworks English and writing teachers apply to hone student critical thinking skills. This introduction sets the groundwork for discussing *Film in composition* as a qualitative research study, whose methods of data collection and analysis have been presented in this chapter.

Thus far, the study has addressed Research Question #1: *What is the theoretical rationale for including film in first-year writing instruction?* Chapters one and two ground this approach to writing instruction in cultural studies-media literacy theories – in particular, the importance of beginning from student knowledge and experience. Yet to be answered are Research Questions #2 and #3: *What critical frameworks do practitioners apply to hone critical thinking skills that are essential for academic literacy? What are the implications of incorporating an aural-visual medium like film into the writing classroom?* Chapters four and five focus on the second research question, presenting cross-case analyses of southern California writing teachers (and their students). These reports demonstrate a narrative-cultural and cinematic-rhetorical approach to film in first-year composition. Chapter six answers the final research question, exploring the impact of these film-writing pedagogies. This report examines how the cases present innovative yet informed ways of applying film study to foster critical response to texts and to develop academic writing.

All in all, the remainder of the dissertation addresses Ellen Bishop's (1999) and John Golden's (2001) query on the need to articulate the teaching and classroom

practices that are integral to the study of film in writing and reading instruction. The cases offer connections between theory and practice. The results yield interesting insights and arguments regarding the inclusion of film in composition.

CHAPTER FOUR

FILM AS CONTENT: A NARRATIVE-CULTURAL ANALYSIS  
OF FILM IN FIRST-YEAR COMPOSITION

Introduction

A popular approach to film in composition, the study of film as content is a creative yet sound teaching practice. The application of narrative-cultural analysis not only serves writing course goals, but also presents a familiar methodology for understanding and evaluating film. In this study, twelve southern California writing practitioners implement this analytical framework to promote critical thinking – particularly through literary and cultural analyses. This group of teachers turns to content analysis

- To understand how films, like works of fiction and creative nonfiction, tell stories;
- To access other written texts;
- To delve into multiple interpretations and explore different subject positions; and
- To explore social-cultural themes and political issues.

The participants undertake the goals of this teaching practice through a variety of critical articles, feature films, literary texts, and writing assignments. Teachers work to broaden the personal schemata of their students, encouraging them to apply academic discourse and to think academically about texts with which they are familiar. For the cases in this

study, the result is a classroom that is engaged in social-cultural issues and content analysis, both of which foster the development of cultural and academic literacies.

### A Word on Methodology and the Participants

This chapter on the narrative-cultural analysis of film addresses Research Question #2: *What critical frameworks do practitioners apply to hone critical thinking skills that are essential for academic literacy?* It is comprised of information collected from twelve writing practitioners teaching at twelve community colleges in and near Los Angeles County. (Refer to Appendix J - A Narrative-Cultural Analysis of Film: The Participants.) The findings are based on the process of collecting and examining teacher interviews, classroom observations, and course artifacts (e.g., course readings, film selections, film handouts, discussion questions, writing assignments, student writing). During and after the study, data were generated, coded, and analyzed to find patterns, themes, and variations among the twelve participants. The data consist of teacher interviews; course handouts; reading assignments; film selections; student papers; scholarship and research on film-writing pedagogy and the study of film and literature; and my impressions. The chapter presents the rationale, objectives, strategies, and academic discourse of this teaching approach and offers case studies of two writing practitioners, with whom I had long-term research partnerships/relationships (Maxwell, 2005, p. 84).

Following the criteria for participant selection detailed in chapter three, I solicited first-year writing professors and instructors from various community colleges in southern California. Among the participants discussed in this chapter, Clara Bautista and Dr.

Madeline Bowman, the case participants, responded to a Letter of Introduction forwarded via e-mail by the department chair and recommended colleagues. Initial meetings were scheduled and, based on these meetings, I planned informal visits to their classrooms, scheduled teacher interviews, and worked toward IRB Research Site Approval. Official classroom observations of Bautista and Bowman took place in October and November 2006, respectively. During the classroom observations, Bautista's freshman composition course and Bowman's advanced freshman composition class met twice a week for 75 minutes over a sixteen-week term. Bautista and Bowman are qualified to teach composition based on their teaching experience and their involvement in various professional organizations. Both draw on their educational background, teaching experience, and self-preparation to include film in composition.

In addition to the teacher participants, I also solicited student participants. This group consists of the students of the two writing teachers who volunteered to contribute to the study through teacher interviews and classroom observations. These participants are a diverse population, consisting of thirty traditional and nontraditional students. In freshman composition, nineteen students volunteered to participate while, in advanced freshman composition, eleven students agreed to participate. At the beginning of each case observation, the students were invited to become participants in the study. The students were observed in the classroom, and their writing was collected and studied to note the development of critical thinking skills and academic writing.

It is worth noting that not all of the information gathered, coded, and analyzed for the study is included in this chapter's discussion. I considered one practitioner, Dr. Eric Fischer, as a possible case applying the study of film as content. Like the cases discussed

in this chapter, Fischer participated in initial meetings, teacher interviews, and classroom observations. When I started data collection and analysis, I initially believed his classroom practices applied a narrative-cultural analysis of film. After engaging in further library research and reflective writing, I recognized the need to recode the data collected for this participant as demonstrating a cinematic-rhetorical approach to film. The information generated from his meetings, interviews, observations, and more are not included in this chapter. His teaching philosophies and classroom practices are paired with another instructor discussed in chapter five.

On a final note, the passages quoted from course readings, writing prompts, teacher interviews, classroom observations, and student papers have been assembled to illustrate the patterns and themes demonstrating a narrative-cultural analysis of film as a teaching practice at the two-year college. During the study, the teacher participants and I discussed student conversations and work collected throughout the classroom observation. The identification of strong writing performances was not grounded in the grades students received in the course but on the key moments when we noted student writing illustrating the application of this critical methodology in their work.

### Film as Content: Two Case Studies

In this dissertation, the application of narrative-cultural analysis is shown to be a popular approach to the study of film. Of the seventeen participants in the study, twelve writing teachers take a content-oriented approach to film. These participants focus on the literary and cultural aspects of film to explore narrative themes and social-cultural issues, to analyze textual construction, to complete close readings, to generate multiple

interpretations, and to broaden student understanding of self and the world. The two participants featured in this chapter, Clara Bautista and Dr. Madeline Bowman, are cases representing this film-writing pedagogy. Although colleagues teaching at one community college, the two have not collaborated regarding their classroom practices. This notwithstanding, both have similar approaches to the study of film as content. It is through their teacher interviews, classroom observations, and a collection of artifacts that I came to understand the application of narrative-cultural analysis. This pedagogy consists of a particular set of objectives and practices concerning film selections, critical viewing methods, classroom dialogues, writing prompts, and student writing. Later in this chapter, their pedagogies are discussed at greater length through a cross-case analysis.

To begin my discussion on a narrative-cultural approach to film, I open with a brief definition of the study of film as content. In this dissertation, the participants – in particular, Bautista and Bowman – present the feature film as a kind of literature, a text communicating narrative themes and social-cultural issues. In cultural studies-media literacy pedagogies, this approach is relevant as it broadens the concept of the word *text*. As a form of storytelling, film shares with literature common structural elements: plot, characterization, point of view, setting, and theme (Considine & Haley, 1999c, p. 273-276, 281-282; Corrigan, 1999, p. 80-88; Firek, 2003b, pp. 41-49; Golden, 2001, p. 61-95; Teasley & Wilder, 1997, pp. 14-15; Vetrie, 2004, p. 41). Like literary works, feature films are texts that form and construct arguments (Berlin, 1996; Schlib & Clifford, 2001). They represent social interests and/or public concerns, which are imbricated in ideological arrangements (paraphrase, Berlin, 1991). As first-year writing teachers,

Bautista and Bowman incorporate feature films into their courses to demonstrate the ways films, like works of fiction and creative nonfiction, tell stories and shape arguments.

Central to a narrative-cultural approach is the application of critical viewing methods. The participants implement this approach to writing instruction to foster critical response, an important goal in first-year composition. To help students respond critically, these teachers structure their courses around narrative themes and social-cultural issues. Table 5: *Film as Content: An Overview of the Participants* (on the next page) lists the themes and issues studied in the classroom. The participants explore a range of topics: the concept of tragedy, the nature of private and public relationships, immigration and the American dream, etc. In their courses, the participants delve into these topics through a number of readings, which I have classified into two categories:

- A set of cultural and critical articles (e.g., “Elements of tragedy,” “Why marriages fail,” “American Dreams”) and
- A selection of feature films and literary works (e.g., *Psycho*, *Notting Hill*, *Mi Familia*, “Vows,” “In the land of the free”).

As cases representing this teaching practice, Bautista and Bowman assign articles that introduce viewpoints on the themes and issues discussed in the course. These readings serve as a framing device for reading, understanding, interpreting, and analyzing film and its narrative arguments. They help establish an academic discourse, a common vocabulary for discussing themes and issues.



Table 5

*Film as Content: An Overview of the Participants*

| Participants    | Rationale for Film Study                                                                | Themes / Issues                                       | Cultural / Critical Articles                                                                                               | Literary Works / Feature Films                                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Karen Baird     | Working with student knowledge to develop critical thinking                             | The Concept of Tragedy<br><br>The Concept of the Hero | Excerpt from <i>The Poetics</i> , "Elements of Tragedy"<br><br>Readings on Alfred Hitchcock<br><br>The Concept of the Hero | <i>Psycho</i><br><br><i>Braveheart</i>                                                                                                                                    |
|                 | Fostering student confidence                                                            |                                                       |                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                           |
|                 | Understanding textual function and construction                                         |                                                       |                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                           |
|                 | Teaching literary terms and concepts                                                    |                                                       |                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                           |
|                 | Analyzing ideological representation                                                    |                                                       |                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Clara Bautista* | Having students think critically about film and written texts                           | The Nature of Private and Public Relationships        | "Three Kinds of Oppression"<br><br>"Why Marriages Fail"<br><br>"Gender Role Behaviors and Attitudes"                       | <i>Iron-Jawed Angels</i><br><br>"Vows" and <i>Notting Hill</i><br><br>"What Kind of King," "Thank Heaven, For Little Boys,"<br>"Women Are Just Better," and <i>Normal</i> |
|                 | Analyzing social and cultural issues                                                    |                                                       |                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                           |
|                 | Focusing on themes, symbolism, and characterization                                     |                                                       |                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                           |
|                 | Applying collaborative learning to generate close readings and multiple interpretations |                                                       |                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                           |

Table 5

*Film as Content: An Overview of the Participants (Continued)*

| Participants         | Rationale for Film Study                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Themes / Issues                                                                                   | Cultural / Critical Articles                                                                                                               | Literary Works / Feature Films                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Dr. Madeline Bowman* | <p>Introducing different views and voices</p> <p>Developing critical thinking and student agency</p> <p>Addressing current political issues to foster cultural literacy</p> <p>Building learning communities to generate close readings and comprehensive reviews of the term</p> | <p>Identities</p> <p>American Dreams</p> <p>Gender and Family</p> <p>Justice and Civil Rights</p> | <p>Chapter Introductions from <i>Creating America</i> (e.g., Identities, American Dreams, Gender and Family, Justice and Civil Rights)</p> | <p>“Letter from Birmingham Jail,” “Independence Day Speech at Rochester,” “I Have a Dream,” “Harlem” and <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i></p> <p>“A Tapestry of Hope,” “In the Land of the Free,” and <i>Mi Familia</i></p> |
| Emma Fields          | <p>Building cultural literacy and critical thinking</p> <p>Bridging the gap between visual and verbal texts</p> <p>Exploring texts to explore themes and to teach terms and concepts</p> <p>Applying learning communities to help students learn in social context</p>            | <p>Race and Culture</p>                                                                           | <p>Movie Reviews</p>                                                                                                                       | <p><i>American History X</i>, <i>Do the Right Thing</i>, or <i>Malcolm X</i></p>                                                                                                                                        |

Table 5

*Film as Content: An Overview of the Participants (Continued)*

| Participants         | Rationale for Film Study                                                   | Themes / Issues                                | Cultural / Critical Articles                                                                            | Literary Works / Feature Films                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Dr. Theresa Hamilton | Working with student knowledge and experience to foster critical thinking  | Love, Romance, and Marriage                    | Campbell's Hero Mythology                                                                               | <i>Like Water for Chocolate</i> (novel and film)                                                                                                                                                                   |
|                      | Introducing film as a different voice or a different point of view         |                                                |                                                                                                         | <i>Spirited Away, Groundhog Day, or The Family Man</i>                                                                                                                                                             |
| Hugh Kava            | Demystifying the act of reading and writing                                | The Concept of the Hero                        | Campbell's Hero Mythology                                                                               | <i>Swingers</i><br><i>The Thomas Crown Affair</i><br><i>Marnie</i>                                                                                                                                                 |
|                      | Teaching from a literary perspective                                       |                                                |                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Dr. Janice Robinson  | Noting the similarities and differences between visual and verbal texts    | A Focus on Characterization                    | Excerpts from <i>Hitchcock Films</i> and <i>The James Bond Man: The Films of Sean Connery</i>           | Short Stories and Letters by James Fenimore Cooper and <i>The Last of the Mohicans</i><br>Excerpts from <i>The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass</i> and <i>Glory</i><br><i>The Shawshank Redemption</i> |
|                      | Developing critical thinking skills                                        |                                                |                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Hugh Kava            | Making connections between texts                                           | Love and Romance                               | "Hunger as Ideology"                                                                                    | <i>Swingers</i><br><i>The Thomas Crown Affair</i><br><i>Marnie</i>                                                                                                                                                 |
|                      | Exploring cultural and ideological issues                                  |                                                |                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Dr. Janice Robinson  | Applying collaborative learning to generate close readings                 | Ideological Representation                     | Excerpts from <i>Hitchcock Films</i> and <i>The James Bond Man: The Films of Sean Connery</i>           | <i>Swingers</i><br><i>The Thomas Crown Affair</i><br><i>Marnie</i>                                                                                                                                                 |
|                      | Fostering the intellectual skills students already have                    |                                                |                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Dr. Janice Robinson  | Broadening student understanding of the world to develop cultural literacy | "Who are we?": American History and Traditions | <i>The Preamble to the Constitution</i> ("We the people...") and <i>The Declaration of Independence</i> | <i>Swingers</i><br><i>The Thomas Crown Affair</i><br><i>Marnie</i>                                                                                                                                                 |
|                      | Honing different kinds of learning and ways of knowing                     |                                                |                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

Table 5

*Film as Content: An Overview of the Participants (Continued)*

| Participants    | Rationale for Film Study                                                             | Themes / Issues         | Cultural / Critical Articles                                                                                                                                                                                | Literary Works / Feature Films                               |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alyson Sanford  | Working with student knowledge and experience                                        | Identity                | An Analytical Framework of <i>The Hero with a Thousand Faces</i>                                                                                                                                            | <i>Smoke Signals</i>                                         |
|                 | Making the familiar unfamiliar                                                       |                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <i>The Lion King, The Fischer King, and The Color Purple</i> |
| Kathleen Tedrow | Preparing students for critical reading and viewing                                  | The Concept of the Hero | "On the Uses of a Liberal Education," "What Does a Woman Need to Know," "Feeding the Ancestors," "America Skips School," "In Defense of Elitism," "When Bright Girls Decide That Math is 'A Waste of Time'" | <i>Lean on Me</i> or <i>The Emperor's Club</i>               |
|                 | Finding the common elements of film and print                                        | The Role of Education   |                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                              |
| Kathleen Tedrow | Working with student knowledge and experience with film to develop critical thinking | Education and Identity  |                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                              |
|                 | Pressing students to think about character, especially thematic analysis             |                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                              |
| Kathleen Tedrow | Analyzing how texts create arguments                                                 | Education and Identity  |                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                              |
|                 | Understanding the role of the reader in the act of reading and viewing               |                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                              |

Table 5

*Film as Content: An Overview of the Participants (Continued)*

| Participants      | Rationale for Film Study                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Themes / Issues                                                    | Cultural / Critical Articles                                          | Literary Works / Feature Films                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Dr. Daniel Weaver | Working with student knowledge and experience<br><br>Fostering critical thinking skills<br><br>Reading and discussing themes and characterizations in class                                                                                    | Literary Themes in Literature and Film<br><br>Ideological Analysis | Chapter Readings on Literary Analysis<br><br><i>Killing Us Softly</i> | "In a Grove" and <i>Rashomon</i><br><br>"The Swimmer" and <i>The Swimmer</i><br><br>"A Work of Artifice" and "Barbie Doll"<br><br><i>Heart of Darkness</i> (novella and film) and <i>Apocalypse Now</i> |
| Matthew Wheeler   | Working with student knowledge<br><br>Delving into social issues through film study<br><br>Building critical thinking skills<br><br>Helping students group ideas, themes, motifs, etc.<br><br>Thinking thematically and culturally about texts | Racism and Oppression                                              | "Racism and Oppression"                                               | <i>Crash</i>                                                                                                                                                                                            |

Table 5

*Film as Content: An Overview of the Participants (Continued)*

| Participants | Rationale for Film Study                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Themes / Issues                                                                    | Cultural / Critical Articles                   | Literary Works / Feature Films                                               |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Stuart Yau   | Identifying themes and issues across texts<br><br>Broadening student understanding of the world<br><br>Understanding textual construction<br><br>Applying collaborative learning to encourage active learning in the classroom | Government Control<br><br>The Influence of Christianity on the Political Landscape | <i>God's Politics</i> and <i>Amazing Grace</i> | <i>1984</i> (novel), <i>The Village</i> and <i>Good Night, and Good Luck</i> |

\*These participants are cases featured in the study.

In addition to the cultural and critical articles, the participants also assign feature films or couple feature films with literary works. This second category of readings illustrates the themes and issues discussed in the articles. Table 5, for example, presents the “Elements of tragedy” and *Psycho* as one unit exploring the concept of tragedy in a feature film. In the classroom, the participants apply literary discourse (e.g., plot, character, conflict, etc.) to complete close readings and to access the written text.

As a part of developing critical response, classroom dialogues have an important role in the study of film as content. Under Rationale for Film Study, the table shows that the participants subscribe to cultural studies-media literacy writing pedagogies on beginning from student knowledge and experience. For a selection of this population (about 42%), this approach involves the application of learning communities to generate close readings. According to Bautista and Bowman, students learn best in social context, interacting with their peers. Learning communities help their students gain a sense of self. They not only foster confidence in personal knowledge, beliefs, and values but also encourage multiple interpretations – in particular, close ideological and expressive readings. When subsumed within a narrative-cultural approach, collaborative learning challenges students to hone their critical thinking skills together, tapping into each other’s questions, understandings, wisdoms, and insights. Group activities press students to assert their own subject positions on love and romance, gender and family, and ideological representation before turning to classroom dialogues on these themes and issues.

Ultimately, the participants want their students to take ownership of the text and to form their own written arguments. In the study of film as content, classroom dialogues

help students wrestle with textual analysis. Writing assignments reinforce the development of student critical thinking skills. Through these assignments, Bautista and Bowman challenge their students to think academically about film. To be successful, students must apply an interpretative framework and an academic discourse to explore narrative themes and social-cultural issues. The application of narrative-cultural analysis requires students to delve into close readings and to consider ideological arguments. Critical response hinges on the ability to articulate the connections between and among texts and to make the transition from personal to public voice and discourse. Both mark a student's move toward a critical academic literacy.

In the following cross-case analysis, I present a glimpse of two first-year composition classrooms. I have assembled my discussion of Bautista and Bowman into sections on film selections, critical viewing, classroom dialogues, writing prompts, and student writing. I have contextualized their teaching methodologies, using the data gathered not only from the cases but also from the ten writing teachers who also participated in this research project. Their approach to the study of film reveals innovative methods for honing the critical thinking skills that are essential to academic literacy.

### *Film Selections*

During the study, I found that the application of narrative-cultural analysis begins with a careful selection of feature films. For the participants, the film selections are an important component of their course because they facilitate the learning process (20I~9; 9I~10). As teachers at the two-year college, the participants encounter a diversified



student population that is more comfortable ‘reading’ film than reading print (20I~6; 9I~6). Like composition scholars, Bautista and Bowman believe the inclusion of film study is favorable in providing an array of social and cultural issues for discussion in the classroom (Adams & Kline, 1975; Dunbar-Odom, 1999; Kasper & Singer, 2001). The participants rely on the familiarity and popularity of film to motivate students to evaluate narrative themes, social interests, and public issues. In this way, film serves as a text and as a tool helping students make the transition toward cultural and academic literacies (4I~2).

A freshman composition professor, Bautista includes feature films in her course to explore the nature of private and public relationships. This thematic focus is organized into three course units: one on *Love and Romance*, another on *Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation*, and a third on *Human/Civil Rights*. For Bautista, these course units cultivate her students’ personal schemata, challenging them to reflect on the individual formations (e.g., race, class, gender, etc.) and social structures (e.g., school, church, government, families, media, etc.) that inform their responses to the text and the text’s view of the world (20I~1, 9). Movies like *Notting Hill* (1999), *Normal* (2003), and *Iron-Jawed Angels* (2004) are screened in class to promote discussions on courtship, marriage, parenthood, culture, identity, sexual orientation, and gender politics. As a class, Bautista and her students consider the cultural and/or political conditions that affect human behavior and social interaction in private and public spaces. In freshman composition, the film selections offer students an opportunity not only to evaluate the nature of relationship conflicts, but also to examine the debatable arguments of the text. For Bautista, film is a kind of argument (20I~5). The interpretations student viewers attribute

to the assigned films are open to question and dialogue. Bautista and her students negotiate multiple interpretations of the assigned films through a series of close readings, group exercises, and writing assignments. In this way, the film selections foster student investment in classroom dialogues while broadening self-concepts and introducing different subject positions.

Like Bautista, Bowman, an advanced freshman composition instructor, includes films that address a particular course theme. Her writing class focuses on American history, tradition, and issues and is organized into thematic units on *Identities*, *American Dreams*, *Images of Gender and Family*, *Justice and Civil Liberties*, etc. Like Bautista, her composition courses work at building student cultural literacy in addition to critical response and academic writing (9I~2). Among the films screened throughout the term, movies like *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1962), *Mi Familia* (1995), and *Bowling for Columbine* (2002) are assigned as take-home reading to further discussions on the American identity, the definition of the American dream, the immigrant experience, the notion of family and its connection to gender roles, racism and equality, and social justice. Through the study of film as content, Bowman presses her students to explore the historical-political conditions that influence social mores and, by extension, government policy. In this particular writing course, the film selections have a cultural significance in representing the political issues and conditions the American people have continued to revisit and reinterpret throughout history. For Bowman, these narrative films pose aural-visual arguments on social interests and political concerns (9I~6). They are texts that can be mined for meaning and argument. The application of film as content helps Bowman's students identify, discuss, and evaluate film arguments. It is a teaching

practice that promotes critical response and initiates students into the world of politics and its public discourse.

As will be clear in later sections of this chapter, the film selections are integrally linked to the course readings in first-year composition. They function as companion texts: readings assigned after students have been introduced to cultural and/or critical articles and literary works (Christel, 2001, p. 80). As texts, the movie selections facilitate discussion on narrative themes and social-cultural issues. Because the students in the study are, for the most part, young adults who are developing a larger sense of the world, the participants' courses are designed to develop cultural and critical literacies in addition to critical response and academic writing. Through the study of film as content, students are introduced to the world of public affairs and discourse, becoming aware of their own self-concepts and multiple subject positions (Cruz, 1999, p. 104; Harris, 1999, p. 70). The following section delves further into the application of this analysis, turning to the critical viewing methods important to a narrative-cultural approach to film.

### *Critical Viewing*

As indicated earlier, an underlying principle for incorporating narrative-cultural analysis in composition is to move students toward academic literacy. Part of this development involves working with the literacy students have acquired through years of watching film, drawing on their personal experiences, and honing the school knowledge they have acquired in their English and language arts classes (Applebee, 1992, p. 9). Like composition scholars, Bautista and Bowman believe this transition involves teaching students how to access the text and, by extension, the public and political world.

This teaching practice emphasizes the connections between film and argument. The study of film as content develops critical response to film argument and mobilizes students to participate in classroom dialogues and to engage in social interests and political concerns. To do well, students require instruction in critical viewing, or in deconstructing the film text. The participants undertake this instruction using three methods: (a) cultural and critical readings, (b) literary works, and (c) the elements of narrative-cultural analysis. These methods draw attention to the act of viewing while providing students the academic discourse particular to the feature film they are studying in the course. In this way, Bautista and Bowman apply a narrative-cultural analysis of film to prepare their students to understand the relationship between textual construction and narrative themes and social-cultural issues.

### *Cultural and Critical Readings*

As a part of narrative-cultural analysis, the cultural and critical readings assigned in the participants' classrooms have an important role in first-year composition. The readings introduce students to social and public interests. This introduction is important for developing student understanding on the multiple subject positions that exist on a particular social relationship or public issue. Through the readings, these teachers hope to broaden the scope of their students' knowledge and experience. In addition to developing personal schemata, the readings also provide students an analytical framework for understanding film and other texts in the course. This teaching practice is especially important to the study of film as content. According to Johanna Schmertz and Annette Trefzer, the application of a critical methodology "enables [students] to read

texts closely” (1999, p. 91). For beginning writers, this approach facilitates critical response not only in classroom dialogues but also in academic writing.

In freshman composition, the readings selected as interpretive frameworks determine the narrative themes and social-cultural issues to be discussed in the course unit. For Bautista, critical responses hinge on the students’ ability to apply the ideas from this particular text to a feature film or a short story. In this study, “Why marriages fail,” feminist author Anne Roiphe explores the complex nature of private relationships: the crisis points that test the endurance of a marriage (paraphrase, Roiphe, 1999, p. 361). For Bautista, it is important that students share their own personal experiences and cultural references to access Roiphe’s text (2001~9, 8). At the same time, it is also imperative that students identify Roiphe’s points on marriage and examine the complexities specific to this social unit (2001~3-4). In first-year composition, it is a tendency for some students to neglect the various social-cultural factors that influence whether two people remain together or decide to part (2001~6). For example, identifying infidelity as the sole reason for divorce overlooks a spouse’s motive for being unfaithful (2001~7). Close readings of “Why marriages fail” help students compile a list of reasons for understanding the challenges marriages face. These close readings lead students to larger questions on the decline of this social unit: “Why has it become so hard for couples to stay together? What goes wrong? What has happened to [people] that close to one-half of all marriages are destined for the divorce courts? How could [people] have created a society in which 42 percent of [children] will grow up in single-parent homes?” (Roiphe, 1999, p. 361; 2001~5) As a class, Bautista and her students return to these questions to understand the relationships represented in *Notting Hill* and “Vows” (Showalter, 2004).

Like Bautista, Bowman includes critical readings in similar ways in advanced freshman composition. These texts, which serve as analytical frameworks for discussing narrative themes and social-cultural issues on films and literary texts, focus critical response. In Bowman's classroom, the ability to think comprehensively regarding the readings in the course is important to the film presentation and individual report assignments that close the term and prepare the students for the final exam. The film selections like *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Mi Familia* are instrumental not only in helping students review the themes and issues covered in the course but also in facilitating the application of narrative-cultural analysis. Like the students in freshman composition, the students in advanced freshman composition are encouraged to connect personally to the text. They are also required to note cultural events that are similar to those represented in the films and to the issues discussed in the critical introductions in *Creating America* (Moser & Watts, 2005), a composition anthology exploring the social-political changes in America from the Revolutionary War to the twenty-first century. In this study, the course units on *Identities* (pp. 115-118), *American Dreams* (pp. 171-178), *Images of Gender and the Family* (pp. 239-244), and *Justice and Civil Liberties* (pp. 385-391) are central to the discussion of the films and other literary works in the textbook. Bowman's application of the critical readings generates a series of discussion questions: "Who is American? Who is entitled to the American dream and to what extent are individuals entitled to this dream and to its democratic ideals (e.g., freedom, opportunity, equality, social justice, etc.)? What constitutes a family? What values, beliefs, and roles are attached to this social unit? In America, who is recognized as belonging to this unit?" (902; Moser & Watters,

2005) Through the presentation and report, students return to these important questions Bowman has addressed in the course.

In first-year composition, the cases' application of these readings is an important aspect of narrative-cultural analysis for two reasons. It provides students a lens with which to understand film and other texts in the course. It cues and constrains response, preparing students for the critical reading and viewing of literary and film texts, respectively. The application of cultural and critical readings is also significant because it is in accordance with composition scholarship and research – particularly, in basic writing and freshman composition (Schmertz & Trefzer, 1999). Because the participants' students are beginning writers, offering an interpretative framework encourages analysis and synthesis – two important aspects of academic literacy. The following section continues the discussion on critical viewing through the application of literary works.

### *Literary Works*

In addition to the cultural and critical readings assigned in first-year composition, the participants also include different works of literature (e.g., novels, short fiction, creative nonfictions, speeches, songs, poems) as a part of a narrative-cultural analysis of film. In this study, literary texts are assigned in the classroom after students have read and analyzed the analytical framework for the unit or term. Like the film selections, these texts illustrate the courses' narrative themes and social-cultural issues. For Bautista and Bowman, the pedagogical objective for incorporating these literary texts into writing instruction is similar to the interest secondary English teachers have for their students: to teach students to produce close readings and critical writing. In first-year composition,

however, cultivating student understanding and appreciation of literature is subsidiary to instruction in different cultural texts. Like the cultural and critical articles, literature is a form of composition. Comparative modes of textual construction and critical analyses of argument are objectives of cultural studies and media literacy education (Berlin, 1996; Costanzo, 1984, 1986; Schlib & Clifford, 2001). When coupled with the film selections, a work of literature serves as a complementary text that fosters critical response and academic literacy.

In freshman composition, Bautista has carefully selected literary texts that contribute to the course theme, an examination of private and public relationships. As a course reading, “Vows” is a valuable text. It extends the course discussion on “Why marriages fail.” This short story has similar narrative connections to *Notting Hill*. Julie Showalter’s fictional piece and Roger Michell’s film are both narratives about couples who have been damaged by past relationships and yet have decided to enter wedlock amidst a host of outside pressures. Both texts include similar characterizations and conflicts: reluctant and controversial figures who are seemingly interested in taking a step toward marriage but who fumble through commitment and compromise issues that are essential to making a relationship work. Because of these narrative connections, the story and the film generate similar classroom dialogues. As a class, Bautista and her students investigate Jan and Adam from “Vows” and Will and Anna from *Notting Hill* as portraits of couples who undergo a series of conflicts throughout the narrative. They discuss the social-cultural factors (e.g., differences in lifestyles, careers, and cultural backgrounds) that complicate these relationships and, by extension, marriages in general (2002~2-11; 2006~5-12). In the course of this three-week unit, “Vows” naturally lends itself to



comparisons with *Notting Hill* and prepares students to watch this film critically for similar narrative patterns and cultural issues.

While Bautista works from one literary text for this particular unit, Bowman requires her students to draw from a variety of literary selections assigned throughout the term for the film presentation and writing assignment. Like the critical readings, these selections may also be found in the composition textbook *Creating America*. Two important literary texts contributing to the course syllabus are “A tapestry of hope” and “In the land of the free” (2005, pp. 146-150, 187-195). Like the readings in Bautista’s course, these texts address similar narrative themes and social-cultural issues as the film *Mi Familia*, the text that is the focus of this case discussion. Like this feature film, the memories shared at the opening of Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston’s speech and the ideas extracted from Sui Sin Far’s narrative focus on the immigrant experience in the United States. These texts, in particular, highlight the social-historical conditions of 1930s America: the disparity between democratic ideals for all and the cultural values and social mores that prevent these ideals from being granted to minorities and undocumented immigrants. Over the semester, Bowman and her students consider a person’s rights to freedom, opportunity, equality, etc. as they apply to the Wakatsuki family, Hom Hing and Lae Choo, and other figures from a number of literary texts (901~3). The application of this literature prepares students to mine the film text for similar narrative-cultural themes and issues (91~2).

In this study, the incorporation of literary texts in a narrative-cultural analysis of film is beneficial to writing instruction. This teaching practice helps students recognize the narrative connections among various texts and acknowledge the different ways these

arguments are illustrated. This application is an integral component of cultural studies writing pedagogy and media literacy education (Berlin & Vivion, 1992; Considine & Haley, 1999a; Golden, 2001; Teasley & Wilder, 1997; Worsnop, 1999). It advocates different kinds of ‘reading.’ Through this approach, participants extend the analysis of cultural and critical texts to the analysis of other compositions (e.g., literature and film). They include literary texts to foster comparisons and contrasts as well as individual and multiple text analyses. Once again, this approach prepares students for critical viewing and hones critical response, both of which are central to academic literacy.

### *The Elements of Narrative-Cultural Analysis*

In first-year composition, an important component of narrative-cultural analysis is the application of academic discourse. According to Schmertz and Trefzer, this vocabulary provides students yet another method for reading texts closely (paraphrase, p. 91). In this study, the academic discourse of narrative-cultural analysis gets students to cue into the text – be it a feature film or a literary piece – by drawing attention to the ‘how’ of storytelling (Costanzo, 1992, 2004): the similar literary devices both film and literature share. Through the application of narrative-cultural discourse, composition students also consider the structural elements that contribute to the meaning of the text. This instruction offers students a critical lens to understand textual construction and, by extension, a common vocabulary to discuss film and literary texts.

In freshman composition and advanced freshman composition, Bautista and Bowman, respectively, have opted to continue developing critical viewing skills through the application of narrative-cultural discourse. The participants believe that the academic

discourse of narrative-cultural analysis is familiar for students. The decision to hone critical thinking skills through the application of narrative-cultural discourse is a sound teaching practice. Students have acquired this school knowledge as a part of their secondary English and language arts education (Applebee, 1992; Penfield, 1998; Teasley & Wilder, 1997). It has been honed through social practice (4I~7; 9I~11; 15I~6). When considered from these standpoints, it is clear to see that this language is closer to student knowledge and experience than the academic discourse of biology or astronomy (Penfield, p. 52). Common narrative elements like *theme*, *plot*, *conflict*, *characterization*, *context*, and *point of view* are addressed in the course of working with literary texts. In both courses, this method of critical viewing is also seamlessly a part of the flow of the classroom dialogue (20O2, 4-5; 9O2~3-9).

Of the elements listed above, *characterization* is the most prominent in student dialogues, presentations, and papers. It is through character analysis that Bautista's and Bowman's students explore narrative themes and social-cultural issues. Students are familiar with characterization, describing characters by their physical and personality traits, their behavior and actions, motivations, and strengths and weaknesses. They frequently engage in this analysis when discussing film (and television). The case participants in this study believe this form of analysis gives students access to social interest and public discourse. This focus on character is not without merit in light of the film-writing pedagogies practiced by composition scholars like Schmertz and Trefzer (1999), Victoria Salmon (1999), and William Costanzo (1992, 2004). In their classroom practices, each of these scholars emphasizes the importance of character analysis as a mode of connecting students to the text and as a way of cultivating empathy and

identification. The latter point on characterization is especially important to broadening self-concepts in addition to deconstructing narrative argument (Penfield, pp. 75-81).

Through this analysis (and other structural elements), Bautista and Bowman ask their students to consider other identities, perspectives, conflicts, and interests.

In this study, the narrative-cultural discourse of film and literature is also generated from the cultural and critical articles discussed earlier in this section. This practice is not unlike the approach Loretta Kasper and Robert Singer (2001) take with their students. For these scholars, identifying and defining key terms “engages students in an analysis of [film] and the key issues presented in it” (p. 21). In much the same way, Bautista and Bowman work with their students to produce lists of words, terms, and concepts that are central to discussing the feature film(s) and other literary texts in the unit or term, respectively. Both lists, which appear below, have been compiled from teacher interviews and/or classroom observations.

*Why Marriages Fail*

Outside Pressures (Work, Parents, Children, etc.)

Growing Apart and Cultural Changes

Myth of Marriage (Real Life v. Delusion)

Lack of Communication

Lack of Emotional, Sexual, and Financial

Self-Discipline

*Why Marriages Succeed*

Adaptability / Flexibility / Acceptance

Growing as Individuals and as a Couple

Genuine Love / Kindness

Communication / Understanding

Emotional, Sexual, and Financial Self-

Discipline (Roiphe, 1999; 2001)

*Race, Gender, and Immigration in America*

The Immigration Issue

Immigration and the American Dream

Family Relationships and Conflicts

Issues of Race and Gender Discrimination

Racism and Exclusion: Gaps in Wages, Opportunities,  
and Education (Moser & Watters, 2005; 91; 902)

As can be seen, both lists prepare students for critical viewing. In essence, the creation of these lists are reading exercises that, like the other terminology, focus students on film content: the plot events, character motivation, narrative voiceover, etc. that communicate themes and issues discussed in class. Bautista and Bowman draw from the cultural and critical articles to define this vocabulary. They require their students to identify, describe, and analyze moments from film and literary texts that illustrate the words, terms, and concepts from these texts.

When both approaches to narrative-cultural discourse are coupled together, this preparation offers students a good foundation for understanding how structural elements contribute to the meaning of the narrative content. In first-year composition, these methods are applied to literary texts before turning to *Notting Hill* and *Mi Familia*. For example, in freshman composition, Bautista's application of this discourse encourages close readings of "Vows." Showalter's perspective, or argument, on marriage is rich in ambiguity. To Bautista and her students, it is uncertain whether or not Jan and Adam will survive as a couple. Showalter's narrative presents characters who have complicated pasts (e.g., a relationship built on infidelity and the pain of divorce) and who are faced with tough decisions (e.g., on prenuptial agreements, wedding arrangements, and breast

cancer treatments). The story illustrates Roiphe's argument on why it is difficult for couples to remain together. At the same time, however, Showalter's characters may also be interpreted as a couple who have a sensible view of marriage and the challenges that are inherent in this relationship. Through an analysis of *characterization*, *context*, and *plot conflict*, students render two very different thematic readings of Showalter's stance on this social-cultural issue (2002~2-11). In this way, Bautista begins to demonstrate how texts are rich, complex, and varied – open to multiple interpretations (2002~3, 7, 9). This instruction provides a foundation for the study of film as content.

Using similar methods, Bowman also applies the academic discourse of narrative-cultural analysis to explore narrative themes and social-cultural issues. Like the approach in freshman composition, Bowman's teaching practice fosters thoughtful readings of "A tapestry of hope," "In the land of the free," and other literary texts. In advanced freshman composition, for example, she introduces students to the public discourses of race, gender, and immigration. Instruction in these key words, terms, and concepts helps students examine various ideological intersections as they pertain to immigration in 1930s America and to contemporary society. As a class, Bowman and her students determine Houston's and Far's arguments on this issue and analyze how both authors engage in these discourses. Narrative techniques like *characterization*, *context*, and *point of view* reveal the authors' appeal to empathy and identification for those who are excluded from equal opportunity. For Bowman, this teaching approach helps students see the role of discourse(s) in narrative argument. This vocabulary is essential to deconstructing the social-cultural factors that make immigration such a debatable issue in

the U.S. In Bowman's course, students learn how these discourses are cultivated in feature films and written texts.

The application of narrative-cultural discourse has an important role in developing critical viewing skills. It provides students methods for understanding how texts are constructed. Through this critical viewing method (and other methods discussed in this section), the participants help their students balance the study of narrative themes and social-cultural issues with the application of structural elements. Instruction in critical viewing promotes active reading and, ultimately, prepares students for the demands of the film and literary text. By extension, Bautista and Bowman also have an interest in broadening personal schemata, introducing students to cultural issues and political discourses. While both teaching practices offer students a cultural and critical overview on a particular issue, the participants press their students to assert their own positions or arguments on various social-cultural interests in addition to forming their own interpretations of the text. This pedagogy encourages students to apply this critical methodology and fosters cultural and academic literacies. The following section demonstrates how this analytical framework and its discourses are honed through classroom dialogues.

### *Classroom Dialogues*

In first-year composition, the application of critical viewing methods prepares students for the narrative-cultural analysis of film. As writing teachers, Bautista and Bowman are successful in cultivating student engagement in classroom dialogues. They facilitate textual analysis through collaborative learning. This teaching strategy presses

students to take ownership of the text, generating multiple interpretations and classroom dialogues on narrative themes, social-cultural issues, and structural elements. Personal responses to film are grounded within a narrative-cultural framework (2004-5; 902). In this way, students partake in social practice and engage in academic dialogue. They sharpen the critical thinking skills that are essential to the development of critical response and academic literacy. Both practitioners achieve positive student responses in their classrooms.

One pedagogical objective of Bautista's freshman composition course is to instruct students to do textual analysis. She facilitates this process in three ways: by assigning relatively short cultural and literary texts, by requiring students to complete multiple readings on their own (e.g., through journal writing and other short writing assignments), and by opening discussion to alternate interpretations of the text. It is the latter method that is important to the discussion of classroom dialogues. Like Joseph Harris, a film-writing scholar, Bautista wants her students to engage in close readings of the text (1999). According to Harris, instruction in critical reading encourages students to articulate what they have to say about the text and to support alternate readings with evidence from the text (pp. 70, 77). In freshman composition, this teaching approach impacts critical response because it requires students to form their own arguments and to negotiate their interpretations with other competing readings.

To achieve this pedagogical goal, Bautista applies a collaborative-learning exercise in which students compile supporting evidence to form opposing arguments on film. Using "Why marriages fail" as a cultural framework, her students explore two thematic readings of *Notting Hill*. Like Showalter's "Vows," Michell's film is also rich



in ambiguity. It is uncertain whether or not Will and Anna will survive as a couple. The filmmaker presents characters and conflicts that may be read in multiple ways. For this activity, four groups of students mine the text to determine if the protagonists will remain married or part ways. This form of classroom dialogue gives students an opportunity to deconstruct film content and understand how a film, like any text, can render different readings. It also enables Bautista's students to take ownership of the course readings and to formulate their own arguments on a feature film.

The classroom dialogues of one group I observed reveal the students' ability to complete close readings of "Why marriages fail" and *Notting Hill*. For this conversation, the five group members begin formulating arguments by way of the film narrative (i.e., recalling an interesting scene and later matching it with a point from Roiphe's article) or through the cultural framework (i.e., naming key words or terms from the article and identifying scenes from Michell's film that illustrate their application). From their opening discussion on *characterization*, the students in this group agree on their interpretation of Will, a bookstore owner from Notting Hill, who undergoes a series of disappointments in an effort to cultivate his relationship with an American actress. The students are challenged, however, when discussing Anna, a controversial figure in *Notting Hill*. Her character is open to different interpretations. The students understand her behavior is motivated by her need to protect herself because of her celebrity status and, at the same time, motivated by her genuine wish to cultivate a long-lasting relationship. During their classroom dialogue, the students have a difficult time not acknowledging her better points. Two students remark that Anna adjusts her plans to return to America so that she can spend time with Will: "She's showing how she's

willing to adapt to his schedule” (20O6~5). Another student also notes that, at the end of the film, Anna is open to compromise and sacrifice (20O6~7). At this point in the movie, Anna asks Will for another chance and gives him a Chagall painting, *La Mariee*, as a symbol of her affection and commitment.

Michell’s characterization of Anna, however, is complicated by her less attractive qualities. The students in the group recognize that Anna is dishonest for not letting Will know that she is dating another person. In the conversation, they reframe their personal responses (that Anna is “a liar”) within the cultural framework, stating that Anna has *poor communication skills*: “It took six months before she apologized. She has a problem talking” with and apologizing to Will (20O6~5, 7). In addition, they also see Anna as prone to rash behavior (20O6~6, 7). She expects Will to understand her perspective on the media’s scandalous coverage of their love affair. In the film, she states: “You really don’t get it. This story gets filed. Every time anyone writes anything about me – they’ll dig up these photos. Newspapers last forever. I’ll regret this forever” (Michell, 1:26:00). The students recall the scene. They believe she is careless with and dismissive of Will’s feelings: “She doesn’t have a balance. It’s too close or too separate. Nothing in between”; “She’s expecting him to understand her. She is selfish. She cares more about her job and her life” (20O6~6, 7). Once again, the students complete a close reading, reframing their personal responses to Anna’s behavior in terms of Roiphe. They all agree that Anna is *lacking in emotional discipline*, which may have its roots in a string of bad relationships. The group members are empathetic in this regard. One student recalls how Anna admits that “she is terrible at ‘normal’ relationships” – that is, relationships with non-celebrities (20O6~8). The group members return to this character on more than one

occasion to analyze her relationship with Will and the reasons their marriage will not work.

In the process of negotiating opposing characterizations of Anna Scott, the students also do close readings of the protagonists' cultural differences. They believe that their cultural backgrounds and different lifestyles will place a strain on the relationship. This point is contextualized in terms of their nationalities: Will is British and Anna is American (2006~6). The group considers the difficulties this couple will face as residents of different countries. Even though both nations have similar social structures, they nonetheless have different cultural mores and perspectives. To the group members, it will be difficult for this couple to decide on a place of residence (Notting Hill or Beverly Hills?). The students question which character will need to compromise on this issue. Although Anna has the means to travel to Notting Hill at a moment's notice, to the students it is more likely that Will will need to bend to the demands of Anna's career (2006~6).

This point on career choices raises another cultural difference between the characters. The students believe that differences in lifestyles threaten the future of this relationship. Will is the owner of travel bookstore; Anna is a successful actor. He leads a quiet life; she leads a high-pressure life. Given the demands of Anna's career, it will have a high priority in their lives. Anna will need to travel a great deal for film productions and Hollywood premieres. Her career is wrapped in her celebrity status: her image in the movies (e.g., the industry that pays her millions of dollars per film) and the paparazzi who are hungry for candid photos or for the latest scandal (e.g., nude pictures and videos, celebrity hookups and breakups). Because Anna cares a great deal about how

she is presented in the media and how she is perceived by the public, the students project the different ways Will might react to his role as the “significant other” or the “househusband” (2006~7, 8). One student projects that this character will eventually resent Anna’s career choices while another student believes that he will come to compare his relationship with Anna to his friends’ ideal marriage. In *Notting Hill*, Max and Bella have an exemplary marriage. They are thoughtful, caring, communicative, and devoted. To the students, Will and Anna’s relationship is fraught with complications. They believe Will and Anna will experience what Roiphe calls *unfulfilled expectations* because they do not fully recognize their cultural differences (p. 363).

Based on this and other evidence, the students believe *Notting Hill*’s argument on marriage is not a positive one. Like any social unit, marriages are susceptible to *childhood assumptions and expectations; growth and change; cultural changes; realities of life; communication problems; and sexual, financial, and emotional discipline issues* (Roiphe, 1999). The students in this group (and other groups) realize that marriage requires a great deal of patience, understanding, and genuine acts of kindness and compromise (2001~10). While the characters in *Notting Hill* may have their good moments, they also have difficulties projecting how outside pressures can affect their partner’s frame of mind. If Will and Anna’s relationship survives, it will be because the two have developed realistic expectations of themselves and each other and remain honest and open to communication. According to the students in this group, Michell’s characters do not show this grace under pressure.

As these close readings demonstrate, the application of narrative-cultural analysis helps students utilize texts in critical ways. According to Harris, how students interact

with texts is important to writing instruction (1999, p. 83). Bautista's film selections, critical viewing methods, and classroom dialogues help students deconstruct texts and explore the complex nature of private relationships. Students begin to understand how the application of narrative-cultural discourse contributes to the meaning of a film. They learn how to make informed arguments based on their close readings of the text. In freshman composition, Bautista's approach to classroom dialogues promotes textual analyses, requires negotiated readings, and prepares students for academic writing.

Like Bautista's application, Bowman's teaching practice also fosters critical response of film and other texts. In much the same way, Bowman facilitates this process using similar course readings and teaching methods: critical and literary texts, reading journals, and reflective writing. The classroom dialogues explore these course materials to foster student critical response to film content. In advanced freshman composition, Bowman presses her students to make connections between and among texts in addition to applying the critical viewing methodologies discussed earlier in the chapter. This form of critical thinking requires students to identify, explore, compare, summarize, and analyze the themes and issues presented in a number of texts. Like Dulce Cruz, a film-in-composition scholar, Bowman wants her students to engage in the recursive process known as synthesis (1999, p. 109). This process helps students evaluate the film selections within a narrative-cultural framework.

To realize this pedagogical objective, Bowman also establishes learning communities for a group film presentation. For this assignment, the students need to select a film clip that demonstrates the relevance of the movie to the social-cultural issues studied throughout the course. They must explain how the theme is dramatized or

illustrated and discuss the effectiveness of the film. In advanced freshman composition, three groups of students work on different films. One of the film selections is *Mi Familia*, the story of three generations of the Sanchez family and its pursuit of the American dream in East Los Angeles, California. The students identify narrative themes and political issues, apply narrative-cultural discourse, draw connections to other texts, and assign presentation responsibilities. As a resource, the students turn to *Creating America* and reading journals to facilitate critical response. Ultimately, the film presentation is a recursive and reflective assignment. It is designed to challenge students to work collaboratively and to think comprehensively about the readings and the theme of the course (Cruz, pp. 103, 109). The assignment gives students access to the written text through the film text, and visa versa. It helps students take ownership of these materials so that they can formulate their own arguments on film. This approach to the study of film as content is essential to synthesis, a component of critical response and academic literacy.

Like the student group in Bautista's freshman composition course, the student group presenting on *Mi Familia* demonstrate their ability to complete a narrative-cultural analysis of film. During this class session, the six group members give a thirty-minute presentation, wherein individual members provide a thematic introduction to the film and the film clip, identify central structural elements, draw connections to other texts, and discuss the effectiveness of the film. For the presentation, the group selects "Days of Change" and the opening of "Mother and Child," a nine-minute clip on the deportation of Mexican immigrants and the expulsion of Mexican Americans who are gathered and shipped to central Mexico. In the clip, Paco Sanchez, the eldest son of Jose and Maria

Sanchez, tells viewers about the anti-immigration sweeps of 1933 and explains that his mother, an American citizen, was one among many who was forced to leave the country. At the time of the INS sweeps, Maria was married with two children and pregnant with a third. Jose was not aware that she was picked up and sent to Mexico. In this scene, Paco recounts his mother's determination to return to her family despite the distance and the danger the journey would entail. It took his mother and brother Chucho two years to return to East Los Angeles.

The film clip from *Mi Familia* is an apt selection to present to the class. This text generates student discussion on a few thematic units: *American Dreams*, *Justice and Civil Liberties*, and *Images of Gender and Family*. It is the latter unit that initially helps students frame their critical responses to *Mi Familia*. Individual group members recall the chapter introduction to *Images of Gender and Family* and couple their analysis of the film with the application of narrative-cultural discourse. In one presentation, for example, a student explains Moser and Watters' discussion on the importance of family: how this social unit "serves as a connection between the individual and the outside world" (2004, p. 239; 9O2~7). For the student, this point is clearly illustrated through the character Paco Sanchez, the *narrator* who is determined to become a writer of his family's story. It is through family that Paco finds his pride, strength, and voice. To the student, he is a kind of historian that "links up the family's experiences with the world," "presenting the story [of his family] on a larger level than just telling the story" (9O2~7). In essence, Paco is documenting generations of his Mexican-American heritage for viewers. He is the readers' connection to these experiences.

In addition to framing critical responses on *point of view*, the critical article also helps students explore the nature of family evident in the film clip. In Gregory Nava's film, the Sanchez family possesses long-standing principles and virtues. Like many Americans, they too believe in the importance of family, tradition, and history as well as the value of discipline and hard work. For one group member, Maria's struggle to immigrate to the U.S. dramatizes these ideas for readers: "The film emphasizes the importance of feeling that we have a family, and how a family makes us feel like there is a purpose to life, that someone cares about us, and that we are able to feel secure or protected. This is clearly seen in Mrs. Sanchez, [who] is willing to face anything to be close to her family" (902~8). This statement supports the film clip chosen for the presentation. In the clip, Maria explains to her aunt that she has no other choice but to face the long journey back to Los Angeles. She cannot imagine a life in Mexico apart from her husband and children. Her life's purpose is to be with her family. For students, Maria is just one character that exemplifies these virtues. In the film clip, her determination represents the affection and commitment people have regarding family. Based on this student's comment, it is clear that Maria is a character with which viewers identify.

A broader analysis of the clip reveals the questions "Who is American?" and "Who is entitled to the American dream?" Both questions are explored in selected readings in *Creating America*. In "A tapestry of hope," the 1994 speech given to the graduating class at De Anza College, Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston explains that during the early half of twentieth century the U.S. predominantly defined 'Real Americans' as white (p. 147). People of color were not included in this definition and were, sometimes, the



target of cultural fears and suspicions (e.g., the internment of Japanese Americans, anti-Chinese immigration laws, the lynching of African-Americans, etc.). In 1933, these sentiments were extended to Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans living in the U.S. In the film clip from *Mi Familia*, the narrator Paco states: "It was the time of the Great Depression. I guess some politicians got it into their heads that the Mexicanos were responsible for the whole thing. I mean, they were taking up a lot of jobs...jobs that were needed for what they called 'real Americans'" (Nava, 0:12:30). Though she is an American citizen, race prevents Maria from being recognized as such. As a result, she is not afforded the *civil rights* she deserves as a citizen.

During the presentation, the group addresses the notion of 'real Americans' and its connection to *racism and exclusion*. The film clip on *Mi Familia* clearly illustrates this theme and issue through *plot conflict* and, by extension, *characterization*. As one student suggests early in the presentation, Maria is the target of discrimination: "It doesn't matter that [Maria]'s American. She looks Mexican and so she is forced on a train and taken to Mexico" (9O2~5). Selected students remark how this experience is an emotional and financial hardship for the Sanchez family. It is clear to them that at this time in U.S. history the government had decided which family bonds are to be honored and preserved (Moser & Watters, 2004, p. 241). In the clip, Paco explains how the U.S. government had arranged a deal with the Southern Pacific Railroad to sweep neighborhoods and deport people at "\$14.75 a head" (Nava, 0:14:15). Based on the critical responses to the film clip, Bowman's students apply narrative-cultural discourse to analyze themes and develop their own positions on a social-cultural issue. The group members clearly

believe Maria and her family are entitled to the American dream and its democratic ideals.

The critical response to this theme and issue is also similar when analyzing other literary texts. Nava's film gives students access to the written text. For example, during the presentation, a student is reminded of Sui Sin Far's "In the land of free," a story about Chinese Americans who decide to birth their first-born child in China but who face difficulties when mother and child return home and find that their two-year-old son is not entitled to enter the country because he does not have the certificates allowing him admission (paraphrase, 9O2~8). During the presentation, another student likens Maria's experience to the treatment of Japanese Americans during and after World War II. For this analysis, she connects *Mi Familia* to Houston's personal account in "A tapestry of hope," explaining that "these stories are about situations that resulted from some kind of discrimination or violation of human civil rights. It is very interesting that both stories took place around the same years" (9O2~8). As noted earlier, the students use film to make connections to social-cultural themes discussed in the course and begin to understand the discussion on race and immigration as a long-standing conflicted issue for Americans.

In the course of the presentation, the students also contextualize the social-cultural themes in *Mi Familia* within the current media reports on immigration in southern California. Through the feature film, students are socially engaged in political issues and public discourse. For example, when Bowman asks why the group decided on this particular scene from *Mi Familia*, a student answers: "We thought it was important to show the INS sweep because it is related to things we've read in the book and to things

we had talked about in class. And it's important because of the [immigration] issue today in the news" (9O2~9). At the time of the study, immigration reform in the U.S. was (and still is) under close scrutiny. Given the large Latino population in southern California, residents of the area were (and are) especially concerned about the implications of the House of Representatives Bill 4437 on border protection, anti-terrorism, and illegal immigration control. Political debates surrounded possible solutions proposed by the government (e.g., driver's licenses and identifications for illegal immigrants and temporary worker programs) and private organizations (e.g., The Minuteman Project for the Protection of Southwestern Border States). The Immigration Rights Protests in late March-early April 2006 brought about much conversation for the upcoming election, which the class discussed in advanced freshman composition (9O2~9). For one student, *Mi Familia* reminds her of Houston's discussion on immigration in "A tapestry of hope": "in economic crisis, immigrants always pay the price and consequences" (9O2~8; Houston, p. 149). In this group, the students recognize how a film like *Mi Familia* informs them of the immigrant experience in addition to the historical and political relevance of this issue in America.

All in all, the group members presenting on *Mi Familia* not only demonstrate that they are engaged with film and written texts but also that they are applying a narrative-cultural analysis of film to make connections between and among texts. Bowman's students have turned to *Creating America* to frame their discussion of narrative themes and social-cultural issues. Their group film presentation illustrates their ability to synthesize information to form one group argument on a feature film (Cruz, 1999). Like the students in freshman composition, the students in advanced freshman composition

demonstrate how narrative-cultural analysis of film facilitates the development of cultural and academic literacies. In the end, the classroom dialogues help students complete close readings, take ownership of the text, and consider the subject positions and material conditions of the characters in *Notting Hill* and *Mi Familia*. The following section turns to the writing prompts assigned in Bautista's and Bowman's courses.

### *Writing Prompts*

Thus far, my discussion on the practitioners' application of narrative-cultural analysis has focused on different critical viewing methods and various classroom dialogues. In both first-year composition classrooms, Bautista and Bowman press their students to make the transition toward critical writing on narrative themes and social-cultural issues in feature films. To accomplish this course objective, the practitioners have developed writing prompts that naturally grow from the application of this critical methodology. In the process, they have also developed writing prompts that have a striking resemblance to assignments offered in "Movies as mentors: Teaching motion pictures," a professional development text presenting the various ways in which film study can be integrated into instruction (Considine & Haley, 1999c, pp. 267-337). Like the assignments in this scholarship, the practitioners' writing prompts hone the critical thinking skills that are important to developing narrative-cultural analysis, close readings, and cultural and academic literacies.

For Bautista and Bowman, critical writing is yet another opportunity for students to apply the study of film as content (20I~1-2; 9I~3). In both freshman composition courses, the writing task closing the unit and term, respectively, builds on the school

knowledge and experience students have practiced. In each assignment, the students are required to create and form written arguments that demonstrate their ability to analyze feature films using a narrative-cultural approach. The two assignments appear below.

Throughout their lives, people find themselves in romantic relationships.

Depending on the individuals involved, there are countless factors that determine if a relationship will be successful. The couple from *Notting Hill* (Will and Anna) has a somewhat rocky relationship. In the film, there is evidence that they will have a successful future, but there is also evidence that they will not have a successful future. Using “Why Marriages Fail” as a base and the evidence from *Notting Hill*, explain why Will and Anna either will or will not have a successful relationship. (20WP)

What was your role in the preparation and the presentation of *Mi Familia*? What is your own analysis and critique of the film: theme, story, and any other aspect of the film plus your response. (9FP/WP)

As both writing prompts demonstrate, the students have been thoroughly prepared for these critical writing assignments. Both prompts are designed to give students access to written texts (e.g., cultural and critical articles and/or works of literature), to hone critical responses to narrative films, and to work toward academic writing.

Being advocates of cultural studies and media literacy education, Bautista and Bowman have created writing prompts that demonstrate interesting connections to this theoretical practice. In freshman composition, Bautista’s writing prompt, an assignment exploring the nature of private relationships, focuses on particular applications of film as

content: pondering the filmmaker's stance on marriage and generating close readings regarding a set of characters using a narrative-cultural framework. Inadvertently, the assignment also presses students to arrive at a larger understanding of the attributes that make for a successful relationship/marriage. As a part of the assignment, Bautista invites her students to project the plausible ending for the two characters in *Notting Hill*. This prompt is a variation of two writing assignments offered by Considine and Haley. In a section designated for secondary English and language arts teachers, the authors explain how film narratives can generate writing and press students to evaluate the endings of films (1999c, pp. 275-276, 281-282). According to Considine and Haley, writing assignments that require students to predict the direction of the narrative and the future of its characters activate critical thinking skills – particularly those having to do with narrative-cultural analysis. Students are challenged to consider what is “plausible and consistent with the characters and context” of the film (p. 282). In a similar way, Bautista is asking her students to think about the narrative as a whole and argue whether the characters will “[live] happily ever after” or not (Considine & Haley, p. 281; 2003~4; 2005~4).

In advanced freshman composition, Bowman's writing prompt is a component of a two-part assignment. Once again, the first component of this assignment requires students to complete a group film presentation, explaining how narrative themes are illustrated in the movie selected for the course. The second component is broader in its scope, asking students to discuss their contribution to the film presentation and compose an analysis and/or critique of the film. The main objective of this prompt is to explore film as content: the narrative themes and social-cultural issues that the film has in

common with other course readings. Like Bautista's writing task, Bowman's prompt is also similar to an assignment recommended by Considine and Haley. In "Movies as mentors," the authors discuss how film narratives are helpful for investigating historical depictions of various communities and social-cultural issues (p. 313). Considine and Haley believe this content analysis is valuable for examining the cultural and political concerns that have conflicted American society. An assignment like this one presses students to consider the social-historical arguments being presented in feature films, an element of narrative-cultural analysis. Through this writing prompt, Bowman requires her students to think about these social-historical arguments and how they are developed through academic discourse.

In the end, the writing prompts invite students to apply narrative-cultural analysis. Students explore social-cultural issues in feature films through narrative themes. Each prompt requires students to break down the arguments in narrative films, using academic terms and concepts. Students are encouraged to deconstruct the text and to make connections between and among texts. In the process, the students must synthesize the information generated from course readings, journal writing, and classroom dialogues and extend this information to their written arguments. These assignments call on students to assert themselves as active viewers and interpreters of the text. In this way, the students form critical responses to film through critical and academic writing. The following section evaluates the students' application of narrative-cultural analysis on *Notting Hill* and *Mi Familia*.

### *Student Papers*

A narrative-cultural analysis of film culminates in the production of academic writing. According to Timothy Corrigan, “Writing about films is one of the most sophisticated ways to respond to them” (qtd. in Fischer, 1999, p. 173). In first-year composition, this response involves a combination of close readings and a synthesis of course materials (e.g., reading journals, reflective writing, classroom notes, etc.). As a class, the case participants and their students have generated a plethora of ideas and supporting evidence to form convincing arguments on film. Students work from this collection of ideas and evidence to compose their own arguments (2006~4-11; 9I~2; 5I~8). As a matter of course, the participants also guide students through the writing process, reviewing outlines and drafts before the final submission of an essay. In freshman composition, Bautista observes this practice. The academic writing students are completing for the unit is one of four major papers in the course. On the other hand, the academic writing in advanced freshman composition, though critical, is intended as a review for the final exam, an assignment that returns to thematic units of the course but through a different collection of short readings. For Bowman, it is important that students have an opportunity to think comprehensively about the thematic units of the course. Through this analysis, they arrive at their own positions on social-cultural issues. In the end, both writing prompts generate student papers that demonstrate critical response by way of narrative-cultural analysis.

In freshman composition, the students continue to explore the nature of private relationships using “Why marriages fail” as a cultural framework for interpreting the film content of *Notting Hill*. This assignment requires students to complete a three-to-four



page argument projecting the outcome of the protagonists' marriage based on the social-cultural conditions presented in the movie. As a general note, Bautista's students do fairly well making connections between Roiphe's article and Michell's film. The essays begin on a relatively strong note, synthesizing the course texts into a single idea: their own argument on the relationship presented in *Notting Hill*. Here is one example from "To Be or Not to Be."

Most people inherently want stories to end on a positive note. People want love to prevail and the good guys to win. Unfortunately, real life doesn't always work out that way. Anne Roiphe, author of "Why Marriages Fail" and well known relationship novel, *Up the Sandbox*, writes a compelling piece of literature regarding the common perils of divorce. In the romantic comedy, *Notting Hill*, the main characters, Anna and Will, ride an emotional roller coaster of ups and downs during their courtship. They face many of the crisis points that Roiphe addresses in her article. Even so, the movie ends on a very optimistic note, leaving the audience with the delusion that the couple will live happily ever after. In reality, they suffer from *communication* breakdowns, *outside pressures* resulting from Anna's demanding career, and the new *stress* that characteristically follows the coming of a new baby. These common crisis points that Roiphe discusses will inevitably lead to the demise of Anna and Will's relationship.

(20SP~V1)

All in all, the introduction is accomplished and well written. Bautista's student opens her introduction acknowledging the wish many viewers have regarding narrative closure – that they inherently want good to prevail – and remarks on how this wish for "happily

ever after” is unrealistic, especially when viewers know that life is often complicated, strange, and open-ended. This commentary is the kind of critical analysis Considine and Haley discuss in *Visual messages* (1999c). For Raquel, *Notting Hill*’s happy ending is inconsistent with the rest of the film. She projects the more plausible ‘ending’ for the protagonists given their character flaws and the plot conflicts they endure throughout the narrative. To make her argument clear to the reader, she incorporates the use of narrative-cultural discourse (e.g., *communication* breakdowns, *outside pressures*, and *stress* within the marriage) as supporting points she will use to interpret the characters and conflict in Michell’s film. In this introduction, Raquel begins applying a narrative-cultural approach to film. She grounds her discussion in Roiphe as a cultural framework and, although she has difficulties transitioning from this framework to her brief analysis of *Notting Hill*, she is deliberate in applying “Why marriages fail” to Michell’s film.

In her paper, Raquel applies the critical viewing methods presented by Bautista to present her first supporting argument. This point is a character analysis of Anna. The passage from Raquel’s paper appears below.

Whether you are single, dating, married, or divorced, everyone has heard from one source or another that *communication* is the key to any successful relationship. It is imperative that couples are able to express how they feel to one another in order to have a quality relationship. From the beginning of the romance between Anna and Will, there were signs of poor communication. Within hours of meeting Will, Anna impulsively kisses him passionately on the lips. She then forwardly invites herself to Will’s intimate family function that evening. She gets to know his closely knit group of family and friends. After a

fabulous date, Anna forwardly invites Will up to her hotel room for a nightcap. Will isn't sure that he should go, but Anna insists. This definitely seems like the actions of a single girl. Unfortunately for Will, Anna's boyfriend ends up surprising her (and Will) at her hotel room with an impromptu visit that shattered their romantic plans for the evening. Anna never communicated that she was already in a long term relationship back in America. She was not the single girl that she portrayed herself to be. This shows a clear disregard for Will's feelings and demonstrates Anna's lack of communication skills. To add insult to injury, it took Anna months to apologize to Will for her atrocious behavior that evening. In actuality, Anna never really took serious responsibility for her hurtful actions towards Will. She has showed that she doesn't place importance on communicating the truth to Will, nor does she communicate or take ownership of her mistakes. (20SP~V1-2)

Unlike her introduction, Raquel's discussion here implies the application of "Why marriages fail" as a framing device. For this discussion, Raquel adopts Roiphe's academic discourse on poor communication to interpret the way Anna misrepresents herself and, more importantly, avoids apologizing for her indiscretion. To argue her point, she uses this language to identify, summarize, and describe moments in the film text that illustrate the terms and concepts in "Why marriages fail" (Kasper & Singer, 2001; Cruz, 1999, p. 105).

As noted from the classroom dialogues, this character discussion of Anna is common among students in freshman composition. Being a controversial character, Anna is often held responsible for why the relationship in the movie will eventually lead

to divorce while Will is often cited as the main reason the relationship will succeed. What is unusual are alternate close readings of Will. In addition to identifying and discussing Anna's communication problems, Raquel also argues that Will's inability to communicate is a contributing factor toward marital problems and the likelihood of divorce. Here is her passage.

Will is also at fault for not clearly communicating. Anna has continuously hurt his feelings and behaved selfishly, yet Will has never really professed to Anna how he truly feels; that he is deeply hurt by her actions. He acts as if everything is fine, when clearly it is not. By Will's passive behavior, Anna never realizes the damage that she inflicts on Will, which could and most likely will lead to Anna hurting Will again and again. (20SP~V2)

This student reading is interesting because it begins to look critically at another character in *Notting Hill*. In her discussion, Raquel takes a different approach not demonstrated in the work presented during small- and large-group discussions. To many students, there is a preferred reading of Will as a character. These preferred readings are supported by the movie, which portrays Anna continually rebuffing Will and his efforts to make their relationship work. In Michell's film, Will is kind, thoughtful, understanding, and generous; his character constitution, however, is a problem according to the student. Raquel suggests that Will's passive behavior gives Anna permission to disregard him. If he would only articulate how he feels, Will might break the cycle of Anna's destructive behavior – or at the very least, help her become cognizant of and apologetic for her actions. In this passage, Raquel engages in an alternative character interpretation, questioning preferred readings (Cruz, 1999, p. 101) and taking ownership of the text

(Harris, 1999). At the same time, she continues to frame her discussion around Roiphe's point on communication, applying the critical viewing methods for reading film content.

This opening discussion on Will and Anna provides a foundation for more serious marital problems the two protagonists can expect in the future. Raquel projects that because the characters lack good communication skills, Will and Anna will falter when faced with outside pressures: the competing demands of career and family. For this point, Raquel argues convincingly, stating that "While being a movie star certainly has its perks, it also comes with a price. Privacy will always be an issue that causes strife in their marriage" (20SP~V2). According to Raquel, Anna has shown herself incapable of handling this kind of outside pressure: "She flies off the handle, panics, and takes out her frustrations on Will when she is under stress from her career" (20SP~V3). Career choices and media pressures strain the marital unit and, by extension, threaten the family unit. Her textual analysis is grounded in supporting information from the cultural framework and a close reading of film content. In this way, she manages the rhetorical demands of the assignment, synthesizing the ideas of both texts to create another strong argument.

For her most important argument, Raquel has reserved the most pressing crisis point from "Why marriages fail" to argue why the protagonists in *Notting Hill* will not remain married for long. She believes that the inevitable stress and compromises necessary to accommodate an infant will break down the marriage. She writes:

Unfortunately, babies don't fix existing problems; they magnify them.

The *myth of marriage* being perfect after a baby arrives is just that; a myth. If there were problems before the baby arrived, then those problems not only exist,

but they are magnified once the baby comes along. Babies have many needs and they require constant love and attention. New stresses like sleep deprivation and demands on time and affection will only add to their troubles. (20SP~V3)

In this passage, Raquel presents the challenging work of caring for a child as a point and suggests the necessary qualities that must be in place in order to take on the role of a parent. Will and Anna lack the characteristics to be successful in marriage. Becoming parents does not change the state of their relationship. To this student, a child creates the marriage myth – that a child will automatically resolve marital issues. As Raquel projects a bleak outcome for the characters, she also implies Roiphe as a part of her discussion, continuing to adopt the academic discourse of "Why marriages fail" (e.g., the *myth of marriage*) to make her own arguments on Michell's *Notting Hill*. For Bautista's student, this point and other evidence counter the very idea that the protagonists will "live happily ever after" (20SP~V4).

Like the students in freshman composition, the students in advanced freshman composition also have the challenging task of forming academic arguments using narrative-cultural analysis. Critical viewing methods and classroom dialogues have prepared students to discuss the narrative themes and social-cultural issues presented in the film *Mi Familia* and in other literary texts. The writing prompt, the second component of Bowman's two-part film assignment, continues to promote the study of film as content. This prompt encourages comparisons between and among texts. It also helps students facilitate the assigned readings and other course materials in preparation for the final exam. In their effort to form critical responses, Bowman's students make the transition toward cultural and academic literacies.

Although the first part of the writing prompt requires students to report their contribution to the film presentation, half the students participating in the *Mi Familia* group begin to develop a narrative-cultural approach to the film and other texts early in their reports. In one paper, Bowman's student writes:

My role in the preparation of the group presentation was to watch "Mi Familia" and find meaning behind the issue of family immigration. In contrast with this, I found that the immigration issue was closely related to "[In the] Land of the Free" from our text [*Creating America*]. In contribution to my group, I had to reread "Land of the Free" in order to link the two stories together. Immigration is a forth-coming issue to our society today, especially after [the] 9/11 terrorist attack. The borders are being strictly protected and just recently, we have had marches in East Los Angeles to protect the rights of the immigrants. This movie comes hand in hand with some of the issues we have discussed throughout the course of our learning. (9SP~L1)

Aside from the problematic diction, vague references, and awkward transitions, Kate is reflective, beginning to apply the study of film as content. She identifies immigration as a central social-cultural issue operating in the film *Mi Familia* and in the literary text "In the land of the free." Kate extends her understanding of the course readings by linking her school knowledge to her personal knowledge of public concerns: the point on immigration as an important issue in southern California. According to Henry Giroux, feature films are tools and texts that can help students gain access to the world (2002, p. 12). Hollywood films mobilize student discussion on culture, power, and politics. In this case, *Mi Familia* not only has raised Kate's awareness of this social-cultural issue and

other public concerns, but also has facilitated connections to a literary text and to the course theme. In advanced freshman composition, both objectives help Kate synthesize comparable narrative threads from a number of texts.

As a part of their discussion, various group members explore the connections between Nava's film and the critical articles in *Creating America*. Below is one passage for a student's essay.

“The individual is shaped through beliefs, values, and assumptions that family holds about the world and that are based on the family member's experiences and collective memory” (239). I clearly saw that family members like Jimmy and Chucho were negatively affected by what they had experienced early on their lives. Chucho turn[ed] out to be a drug dealer since he saw that his immigrant parents were working hard and that they were not making a lot of money. He noticed that sometimes the money people make has nothing to do with how hard they work. He felt discontent and decided to take the easy route so he could have what others have, and that he would not have been able to obtain in an honest manner. Also, Jimmy shows some discontent and anger toward the police and the way he is seen by them. He knows that they only portray him as a criminal. When he goes back to prison the police officer tells him that his kind always come back. Jimmy is put into the category of a burden for society; he does not see what his role in society is. He had become so desensitized that he does not even fe[e]l pain anymore when he steals from a jewelry [store] and lets himself get caught. (9SP~N1-2)



Looking past Selma's difficulties with handling quotations and awkward phrasing, her paragraph begins to synthesize the ideas from the introduction to *Images of Gender and Family* with the film *Mi Familia*. Using Moser and Watters as a base, Selma explores the family conflicts facing immigrant families. In *Mi Familia*, the Sanchez family is representative of other immigrant families who come to the U.S. for a chance at new hopes, new possibilities, and new beginnings. As parents, Jose and Maria Sanchez believe in the American dream and working hard for it. This perspective on America as a land of opportunity is not accepted, however, by all of their children – in particular, Chucho and Jimmy. In essence, both are learning to define, or more appropriately, reconcile their family's values and beliefs with the American dream (e.g., “hard-work-pays-off” narratives and “get-rich-quick” schemes). These characters do not know what their role in society is. Chucho and Jimmy want to be included in the American dream but have been defined as outcasts. They are desensitized to the community's response and ignore the pleas of their parents to change. Through this analysis, Selma completes a narrative-cultural analysis, alluding to its discourse on *race*, *exclusion*, and *entitlement to the American dream* (Kasper & Singer, 2001, p. 21).

Based on various student responses, it is evident that Nava's film has left an impression on the members of the group. The students take clear positions on the immigration issue. One critical response is particularly strong. An excerpt appears below.

The [immigration] theme was very important because it portrayed the Mexican and Mexican-American families and their struggles in raising a family in the United States more specifically in Los Angeles, California. [T]he film

described problems around today. The mistreatment and discrimination against Mexican people still exist. It is known that Los Angeles County is a leading county in the United States repatriating Mexicans. The civil rights of many Mexican Americans are continuously violated. For example, Mexican-American children are negated the right to live and be raised by their parents when they are deported. In other words, their parents are negated the right to raise their own children. (9SP~V2)

Once again, the paragraph contains writing patterns common to first-year writing students at community colleges. This notwithstanding, *Mi Familia* (and other literary texts) have cultivated feelings of empathy in Elizabeth's critical response (Schmertz & Trefzer, 1999; Salmon, 1999; Costanzo, 1992, 2004). For the student, the immigration issue is not as simple as deporting undocumented residents back to their former countries. These individuals have established new lives in the U.S. and have families to raise and protect. Nava's film is culturally significant to contemporary society. *Mi Familia* has heightened her awareness on the immigration issue and has broadened this student's subject position. In this passage, Elizabeth takes a position on this political issue, using academic and public discourse(s) (e.g., *discrimination*, *civil rights*, and *repatriating*) to assert her argument on an important narrative theme in *Mi Familia* (Berlin, 1996; Giroux; hooks, 1996).

The application of *Mi Familia* (and the other films in this unit) is demonstrative of Bowman's teaching and learning philosophies: connecting self to the world. As one student remarks, a movie like *Mi Familia* is a "great example to show the younger generations what life was like during [their] grandparents['] era, and how there is still

time to change things for the better” (9SP~B2). Like the passages quoted here, this commentary is writing that engages with and connects to the text. Through the study of film as content, Bowman’s students not only practice the intellectual skills that are important to critical response but also learn to be agents of change (Giroux). The films selected for this two-part assignment focus on mobilizing change. As one of the film selections, *Mi Familia* is about a character or a figure challenging the values and beliefs of a community. It appeals to democratic ideals. It calls for better ways of life, of creating equal opportunities and a voice for all. As a part of narrative-cultural analysis, this film text generates reflective writing while developing cultural and academic literacies.

As this discussion on student writing demonstrates, the practitioners’ application of narrative-cultural analysis provides students a lens in which to read, understand, interpret, and analyze the film text. This critical methodology helps students frame their academic arguments. It cues and constrains viewer response (Fehlman, 1994). The student writing discussed here clearly demonstrates an engagement with narrative themes and social-cultural issues in *Notting Hill* and *Mi Familia*. The students in first-year composition have worked diligently to sort through multiple interpretations on these feature films to create and shape their own written arguments (Harris, 1999, p. 71). They assert themselves as readers and writers of film. Through this film-writing pedagogy, Bautista and Bowman facilitate the goals of first-year composition.

## Conclusions

As this chapter demonstrates, a narrative-cultural analysis of film is an effective approach to first-year composition. Through this critical framework, the practitioners present how films, like works of fiction and creative nonfiction, tell stories and contain arguments. For the participants, this application facilitates an understanding of textual construction. It enables their students to complete close readings and to explore multiple interpretations of the text. A narrative-cultural analysis of film helps students access the text – in particular, the written text. Like cultural studies writing pedagogy, this teaching approach bridges the gap between the aural-visual and verbal forms of communication (Allender, 2004; Holbrook, 1987; Hunt & Hunt, 2004; Penrod, 1997a).

In this study, a narrative-cultural analysis of film is beneficial to writing students. Through this application, the participants draw on student knowledge and experience to analyze narrative themes and social-cultural issues and to explore different self-concepts and subject positions. In the observed classrooms, the study of film cultivates an authentic learning environment (Aronowitz qtd. in Giroux et al., 1989; Alvermann, Moon, & Hagood, 1999; Considine & Haley, 1999a; Costanzo, 2004; George & Trimbur, 2001; Hobbs, 2006; Masterman, 1985; Vetrie, 2004). It promotes small-group and large-group discussions. As a class, the practitioners and their students assert their readings, interpretations, and positions on film and other texts. The approach generates an engaged classroom. It motivates student investment and learning, helping the practitioners broaden the scope of personal schemata (Berlin & Vivion, 1992; Kasper, 1999; Vetrie) and develop student critical thinking skills (Berlin, 1996; hooks, 1996; Giroux, 2002; Schmertz, 2001).

The study of this film-writing pedagogy also reveals important developments in student academic literacy. Although many of the student participants are beginning writers, their classroom dialogues and writing assignments illustrate that they are honing critical thinking skills through a narrative-cultural approach. In these writing classrooms, students work with the previous knowledge and experience they have with this critical framework to complete close readings, to deconstruct a variety of texts, and to make connections between and among texts. Through the study of film as content, they practice analysis and synthesis, related critical thinking skills that are important in first-year composition (Cruz, 1999). As a part of this work, students discuss social-cultural issues: the nature of private relationships and the complexity of the immigrant experience. They cultivate a public voice that is instrumental in creating and shaping their written arguments (Berlin; Giroux; hooks; Schmertz).

In brief, a narrative-cultural analysis of film helps develop the intellectual skills students require to become critical viewers, readers, and writers. For Bautista, Bowman, and the participants, the approach is instrumental to facilitating the transitions from high school to college English. It is a teaching practice that clearly fosters the development of academic literacy.

CHAPTER FIVE

FILM GENRE IN COMPOSITION: A CINEMATIC-RHETORICAL ANALYSIS  
OF FILM IN FIRST-YEAR COMPOSITION

Introduction

One of the pleasures of film study in first-year composition is developing a teaching practice that meets course goals and resonates with the students. For a group of five writing teachers in southern California, a cinematic-rhetorical analysis of film is one such practice. It changes the classroom atmosphere, creating a community of critical thinkers. In the study, this pedagogical approach combines two analytical frameworks – the cinematic and the rhetorical –

- To present film as a form of composition;
- To explore how films communicate;
- To study textual construction;
- To demonstrate the broad connections among film, writing, and argument; and
- To uncover ideological purpose in the film text.

As will be illustrated in this chapter, the participants address these topics through the application of film genre in composition. They take a broad approach to the study of movie genres like the comedy, suspense, horror, western, and sports film. While the participants address the basic cinematic-rhetorical properties of film, they also work toward writing course goals. Their main objective is to foster the critical thinking skills that are essential to academic literacy.

## A Word on Methodology and the Participants

This chapter on the cinematic-rhetorical analysis of film continues to address Research Question #2: *What critical frameworks do practitioners apply to hone critical thinking skills that are essential for academic literacy?* It is comprised of information collected from five writing practitioners teaching at seven community colleges in and near Los Angeles County. (Refer to Appendix K - A Cinematic-Rhetorical Analysis of Film: The Participants.) The findings are based on the process of collecting and examining teacher interviews, classroom observations, and course artifacts (e.g., course readings, film selections, writing assignments, student writing). During and after the study, data were generated, coded, and analyzed to find patterns, themes, and variations among the five participants. The data consist of teacher interviews; course handouts; reading assignments; film selections; student papers; scholarship and research on film-writing pedagogy and the study of film genre; and my impressions. The chapter presents the rationale, objectives, strategies, and academic discourse of this teaching approach and offers case studies of two writing practitioners, with whom I had long-term research partnerships/relationships (Maxwell, 2005, p. 84).

Following the criteria for participant selection detailed in chapter three, I solicited first-year writing professors and instructors from various community colleges in southern California. Among the participants discussed in this chapter, Drs. Anne Bratton-Hayes and Eric Fischer, the case participants, responded to a Letter of Introduction forwarded via e-mail by the department chair and recommended colleagues. Initial meetings were scheduled and, based on these meetings, I planned informal visits to their classrooms, scheduled teacher interviews, and worked toward IRB Research Site Approval. Official

classroom observations of Bratton-Hayes and Fischer took place in April-May and October-November 2006, respectively. During the classroom observations, Bratton-Hayes' basic writing course met twice a week for 100 minutes over an eighteen-week semester; Fischer's freshman composition course met once a week for 150 minutes over an eighteen-week term. Both have training in teaching writing by way of their educational background in addition to years of teaching experience. Both draw on their educational background – and self-preparation – to include film in composition.

In addition to the teacher participants, I also solicited student participants. This group consists of the students of the two writing teachers who volunteered to contribute to the study through teacher interviews and classroom observations. These participants are a diverse population, consisting of thirty-four traditional and nontraditional students. In basic writing, twenty students volunteered to participate while, in freshman composition, fourteen students agreed to participate. At the beginning of each case observation, the students were invited to become participants in the study. The students were observed in the classroom, and their writing was collected and studied to note the development of critical thinking skills and academic writing.

It is worth noting that not all of the information gathered, coded, and analyzed for the study is included in this chapter's discussion. I considered one participant, Dr. Grace Leigh, as possible a case for the application of cinematic-rhetorical analysis. This writing instructor participated in initial meetings, teacher interviews, and classroom observations. Although she primarily teaches at the community-college level, the classroom observation of this instructor took place at another place of employment, a four-year university. For this reason, her teacher interviews and a selection of course handouts



from various community colleges courses are only included as a part of this chapter's discussion on the cinematic-rhetorical analysis of film in first-year composition.

On a final note, the passages quoted from course readings, writing prompts, teacher interviews, classroom observations, and student papers have been assembled to illustrate the patterns and themes demonstrating a cinematic-rhetorical analysis of film as a teaching practice at the two-year college. The teacher participants and I discussed student conversations and work collected throughout the classroom observation. The identification of strong writing performances was not grounded in the grades students received in the course but on the key moments when the cases and I noted student writing illustrating the application of this critical methodology in their work.

### Film Genre in Composition: Two Case Studies

The application of cinematic-rhetorical analysis is the second film-writing pedagogy presented in this dissertation. Unlike the previous study, the pedagogy discussed in this chapter consists of a decidedly smaller number of participants. Of the seventeen participants in the study, five writing teachers take a cinematic-rhetorical approach to film. The study of film genre, a classification of movie kinds, is a unique and surprising teaching practice. Often dismissed as "entertainment" (Lehman & Luhr, 2003, p. 100), film genres are relegated to the popular, an inferior text conforming to a set of formulas and expectations (Teasley & Wilder, p. 1997, p. 74). The two participants featured in this chapter, Drs. Anne Bratton-Hayes and Eric Fischer, are cases representing this film-writing pedagogy. Although these participants teach at different two-year colleges, the two have similar approaches to the study of film genre in composition.

Through their teacher interviews, classroom observations, and a collection of artifacts, I came to understand the application of cinematic-rhetorical analysis. Like the study of film as content, the study of film genre in composition consists of a set of pedagogies on film selections, critical viewing methods, classroom dialogues, writing prompts, and student writing. This chapter takes a closer look at these pedagogies through a cross-case analysis of two first-year composition classrooms.

Before I turn to this analysis, however, it is important to define a cinematic-rhetorical approach to film. In this dissertation, the participants – in particular, the cases – introduce the genre film as a form of composition, a text filmmakers write within codes and conventions to meet audience expectations. According to cultural studies-media literacy theories, this approach is relevant as it presents a concrete model of composition and rhetoric (Berlin, 1996; Thoman, et al., 2003). Like the written text, the genre film is subject to the rhetorical context of writer, reader, content, and messages (Harrington, 1973; Schmertz & Trefzer, 1999). As cultural studies-media literacy advocates, the participants in this study believe that film – genre films included – express a point of view, or argument, through the careful selection and arrangement of materials. In the writing classroom, Bratton-Hayes and Fischer explore how these film arguments are constructed. Table 6: *Film Genre in Composition: A Participant Overview* (on the next page) presents the film genres the participants include for textual analysis. These writing teachers focus on a variety of genres: the comedy, suspense, horror, western, and sports film. The participants address the study of argument through a film selection or a group of films.

Table 6

*Film Genre in Composition: An Overview of the Participants*

| Participants            | Rationale for Film Study                                                                 | Film Genre               | Genre Films                                                                                                                 | Reading Selections                                                                                                                                                                                     | Heuristics                                         |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Karen Baird             | Working with student knowledge of genre to develop critical thinking                     | The Sports Film          | <i>Bleachers</i><br><i>Million Dollar Baby</i><br><i>Miracle on St. Anthony's</i>                                           | <i>Bleachers</i><br><i>Million Dollar Baby</i><br><i>Miracle on St. Anthony's</i>                                                                                                                      | Character Types                                    |
|                         | Fostering student confidence                                                             |                          |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                        | The Obstacles                                      |
| Dr. Anne Bratton-Hayes* | Articulating intuitive knowledge of images                                               | The Suspense Horror Film | <i>Psycho</i><br><i>Strangers on a Train</i><br><i>Rope</i><br><i>Marnie</i><br><i>Vertigo</i><br><i>North by Northwest</i> | "Moving Pictures: Writing to Tell Stories"<br>"Film Stories in the Twentieth Century"<br>"Last Laugh: Was Hitchcock's Masterpiece a Private Joke?"<br>"Hitchcock's Use of Profiles in <i>Vertigo</i> " | Working Toward the Goal                            |
|                         | Understanding textual function and construction                                          |                          |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                        | The Comeback                                       |
| Dr. Anne Bratton-Hayes* | Analyzing ideological representation                                                     | The Suspense Horror Film | <i>Psycho</i><br><i>Strangers on a Train</i><br><i>Rope</i><br><i>Marnie</i><br><i>Vertigo</i><br><i>North by Northwest</i> | "Moving Pictures: Writing to Tell Stories"<br>"Film Stories in the Twentieth Century"<br>"Last Laugh: Was Hitchcock's Masterpiece a Private Joke?"<br>"Hitchcock's Use of Profiles in <i>Vertigo</i> " | What is the suspense film?                         |
|                         | Exploring film structures of genre to foster active viewing and critical thinking        |                          |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                        | What makes a movie suspenseful?                    |
| Dr. Anne Bratton-Hayes* | Considering ethics of viewing (pleasures and censorship)                                 | The Suspense Horror Film | <i>Psycho</i><br><i>Strangers on a Train</i><br><i>Rope</i><br><i>Marnie</i><br><i>Vertigo</i><br><i>North by Northwest</i> | "Moving Pictures: Writing to Tell Stories"<br>"Film Stories in the Twentieth Century"<br>"Last Laugh: Was Hitchcock's Masterpiece a Private Joke?"<br>"Hitchcock's Use of Profiles in <i>Vertigo</i> " | Who are the characters?                            |
|                         | Developing media awareness of film culture (e.g., cultural rituals and Hollywood system) |                          |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                        | What are the conflicts and how are they resolved?  |
| Dr. Anne Bratton-Hayes* | Seeing the filmmaker as writer                                                           | The Suspense Horror Film | <i>Psycho</i><br><i>Strangers on a Train</i><br><i>Rope</i><br><i>Marnie</i><br><i>Vertigo</i><br><i>North by Northwest</i> | "Moving Pictures: Writing to Tell Stories"<br>"Film Stories in the Twentieth Century"<br>"Last Laugh: Was Hitchcock's Masterpiece a Private Joke?"<br>"Hitchcock's Use of Profiles in <i>Vertigo</i> " | What images and sounds are common to these movies? |
|                         | Teaching rhetorical modes                                                                |                          |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                    |

Table 6

*Film Genre in Composition: An Overview of the Participants (Continued)*

| Participants      | Rationale for Film Study                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Film Genre      | Genre Films                                                                                | Reading Selections                                                                                 | Heuristics                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Emma Fields       | Working with student knowledge of genre to develop critical thinking<br><br>Teaching rhetorical modes<br><br>Making connections between visual and written texts                                                                                          | The Horror Film | <i>The Blair Witch Project</i>                                                             | “Why We Crave Horror Movies”                                                                       | Fright Factor<br><br>Bad Guy/Victim Relationship<br><br>Death<br><br>Gore                                                                                                                                                               |
| Dr. Eric Fischer* | Working with student knowledge of culture to develop critical thinking<br><br>Articulating genre codes and conventions<br><br>Focusing on how the film text represents culture<br><br>Developing media awareness of film culture (e.g., Hollywood system) | The Western     | <i>All the Pretty Horses</i><br><br><i>The Wild Bunch</i><br><br><i>Brokeback Mountain</i> | “On Being a Real Westerner”<br><br>“Love: The Right Chemistry”<br><br><i>All the Pretty Horses</i> | What are the codes of the west?<br><br>Who are the good guys?<br>The bad guys?<br><br>How is the act of trespassing presented as conflict?<br><br>How are problems resolved in the west?<br><br>What images are typical to the western? |

Table 6

*Film Genre in Composition: An Overview of the Participants (Continued)*

| Participants    | Rationale for Film Study                                         | Film Genre      | Genre Films                                                                               | Reading Selections | Heuristics                                            |
|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Dr. Grace Leigh | Demonstrating new ways of seeing                                 | The Comedy Film | <i>Harold and Kumar Go to White Castle</i><br><br><i>Fridays</i><br><br><i>Half Baked</i> | -                  | What is this movie about?                             |
|                 | Challenging students to think academically about the comedy film |                 |                                                                                           |                    | What does this movie do?                              |
|                 | Analyzing ideological representation                             |                 |                                                                                           |                    | Is there slapstick or physical humor?                 |
|                 | Making connections between film and written texts                |                 |                                                                                           |                    | How does the movie present and resolve conflict?      |
|                 |                                                                  |                 |                                                                                           |                    | How does the movie portray class, race, gender, etc.? |

\*These participants are cases featured in the study.

Like the first group of participants practicing narrative-cultural analysis, the participants in this second study also have an interest in developing student critical responses to texts. Bratton-Hayes and Fischer apply critical viewing methods to foster awareness of textual construction and argument. As shown in Table 6, one of these methods includes the application of heuristics, a set of questions (or codes and conventions), that require students to articulate their intuitive knowledge of moving images. These heuristics challenge students to think academically about genre films, completing individual and multiple text analyses to create definitions, make comparisons, and classify a set of films. They generate an academic discourse, a common vocabulary for discussing film genres. In addition to the application of heuristics, the participants also foster critical viewing through a variety of course readings. This selection of written texts, which are listed in the table, may be classified into three categories:

- Critical articles on cultural issues (e.g., “Love: The right chemistry”),
- Essays on film (e.g., “Moving pictures: Writing to tell stories,” “Why we crave horror movies”), and
- Works of literature (e.g., *Bleachers*, “On being a real westerner,” *All the pretty horses*).

For Bratton-Hayes and Fischer, including the participants, these readings provide an alternative “lens” for reading, understanding, interpreting, and analyzing genre films. They contextualize the existential situations of the film characters, present additional information on film genres or genre films, and introduce different kinds of compositions and interpretations. More importantly, these readings balance the study of film in

composition, offering a variety of texts for analysis while raising the connections between film and writing.

As a part of developing active viewing/reading methods, the participants also hone critical response through classroom dialogues. The rationale for including the study of film in the classroom, listed in Table 6, is to widen the scope of student knowledge and experience. Like the participants in chapter four, the participants in this population facilitate critical thinking through social practice: casual conversations on the codes and conventions of genre and on the pervasiveness of film and film culture. In their courses, Bratton-Hayes and Fischer explore the cultural rituals that drive film genres and the Hollywood studio system that creates production-consumption cycles. These discussions address the connections between film and culture, demonstrating the role the audience has in making meaning and in producing genre films. Classroom dialogues aim to restructure student responses. They offer new ways of understanding film. These dialogues are an opportunity for students to explore the film text as argument, to consider the filmmaker as writer, and to discuss the representation of ideology. Through classroom dialogues, the participants help their students think critically about the function and structure of film and, by extension, written texts.

Ultimately, the participants want their students to draw on their personal knowledge and experience with film to form their own written arguments. In these classrooms, the application of cinematic-rhetorical analysis culminates in student writing. For Bratton-Hayes and Fischer, the writing assignments reinforce the development of critical thinking skills. These assignments challenge their students to explore how genre films position readers. To do well, students must apply the critical viewing methods

presented in the course. The application of this analytical framework provides a lens with which to analyze the ways genre films conform to and/or depart from audience expectations. The codes and conventions of film genre also provide a framework for evaluating the representation of ideology. In the study of film genre in composition, critical response hinges on the ability to denaturalize the text and the mechanisms through which genre films communicate. This response marks the development of critical thinking and academic writing.

From this point, I present a cross-case analysis of two first-year composition classrooms. I have assembled my discussion of Bratton-Hayes and Fischer into sections on film selections, critical viewing methods, classroom dialogues, writing prompts, and student papers. I have contextualized their teaching methodologies, using data gathered not only from the cases but also from the three writing teachers who also participated in this research project. Their approach to the study of film offers unique teaching methods for developing critical thinking skills that are important to academic literacy.

### *Film Selections*

In completing teacher interviews, I found that Bratton-Hayes and Fischer both strongly believe that working with community college students requires innovative methods. These students, who come from varying educational backgrounds, are immersed in an image culture (2I~6; 18I~2). They are more comfortable ‘reading’ television and film images than they are with reading print. As writing teachers, Bratton-Hayes and Fischer deem the study of film genre a sound yet inspired approach to writing instruction (2I~24; 18I~3). This film-writing approach activates student cultural



knowledge and experience (Considine & Haley, 1999c; Teasley & Wilder, 1997). Their students are familiar with suspense and western films, respectively. Both film kinds are part of cultural folklore and long-standing genres of American cinema. On a larger scale, the study of these movie genres serves as a method for understanding textual construction and function: the relationship between cinematic technique and rhetorical purpose (Berlin, 1991, 1996; Masterman, 1985; Thoman et al., 2003). Both are important to developing active viewing, critical response, and, later, academic writing.

A basic writing instructor, Bratton-Hayes includes the suspense film to explore past codes and conventions of the genre and to discuss its current developments in contemporary films – namely, the horror film. Movie and movie clips from *Strangers on a Train* (1951), *Psycho* (1960), *Rope* (1948), *Vertigo* (1958), *Marnie* (1964), and *North by Northwest* (1959) are screened in her class to explore the elements of modern suspense as conceived by Alfred Hitchcock. These selections serve as a foundation for discussing suspense horror films with which students are familiar: *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1974, 2003), *Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>* (1980), *The Sixth Sense* (1999), *The Blair Witch Project* (1999), *The Village* (2004), and *Hostel* (2005). While Bratton-Hayes has considered using contemporary suspense horror films as primary film selections in basic writing, she believes focusing on Hitchcock is valuable to the study of film and writing instruction. His films serve as a point of contrast to the films being produced today. Without the use of special effects, his movies contain a dark thriller component. They are deliberate, focused, and ironic in their construction and presentation of suspense horror. They do not follow the typical “Hollywood twist” ending but rather violate this code and convention by providing this twist to viewers at the beginning or middle of his films. In addition, the

film selections in basic writing also do not include the dark graphic imagery that so pervades contemporary horror films. Hitchcock movies raise questions regarding cinematic-rhetorical technique:

- Who is Hitchcock's audience?
- As a viewer, are you frightened or tensed up by the old style of suspense horror?
- Is there a new audience for Hitchcock? (2I~7, 9-10)

These questions commence an ongoing discussion on audience expectations and film construction, rhetoric, and ideology (e.g., the representation of violence, women, and gore), a topic this chapter will later revisit.

Like Bratton-Hayes, Fischer, a freshman composition professor, concentrates on a particular film genre. Through teacher interviews (and classroom observations), I learned that his approach to the study of the western genre helps students develop their viewing skills and critical responses to film. For his course, he has selected *All the Pretty Horses* (2000), *The Wild Bunch* (1969), and *Brokeback Mountain* (2005) as film examples that conform to and depart from genre codes and conventions. These relatively contemporary westerns generate discussion on movie genre and film rhetoric as well as the relationship between filmmaking and viewer expectations. These subject areas are primarily explored through a common genre convention: the study of trespassing in the western. As the overarching focus of the unit, Fischer introduces this convention to promote classroom dialogues on ideological representation. In this cinematic-rhetorical application, Fischer poses the following questions:

- How is the act of trespassing presented in each western?
- Is there trespassing against property or persons?
- Is there trespassing that is against the law? That is illegal traveling?
- Do the characters trespass against the code of the west?
- Is the act of trespassing presented as unwanted behavior?
- Do the films portray this act as moving against a promise, a hope, or a dream?
- Are there any trespasses that are unforgivable? (1804~2)

This series of questions get students thinking about direct and indirect forms of this act and how it functions as a genre convention. As these westerns reveal, the act of trespassing is the struggle for power. Through cinematic-rhetorical analysis, Fischer's students begin to understand the cultural significance of the western genre.

As this discussion on film selection demonstrates, the genre movies Bratton-Hayes and Fischer have selected press students to apply the critical thinking skills central to a cinematic-rhetorical approach. The suspense horror and western films are familiar to students. They are successful and celebrated genre forms, appealing to both male and female students and audiences of different ages. The selections naturally lend themselves toward modes of discourse pedagogy: definition, classification, exemplification, and comparison-and-contrast analyses (Teasley & Wilder, p. 73). This instruction is included in most composition-rhetoric textbooks and, to a certain extent, a part of composition at the two-year college. Through these selections, Bratton-Hayes and Fischer help their students complete individual and multiple text analyses. Students explore the genre as a way of reading and, more importantly, begin to build the connections among film, writing, and argument, a subject the following section looks at more closely.

### *Critical Viewing*

An objective for applying a cinematic-rhetorical approach to film study is to move students toward academic literacy. Part of this development involves working with student film literacy to make the transition from a *lay* literacy to more sophisticated forms of critical response. For Bratton-Hayes and Fischer, this transition involves teaching students how to deconstruct the moving image and to make the connections among film, writing, and argument. This approach requires instruction in critical viewing. The case practitioners undertake this instruction using three methods: (a) the codes and conventions of film genre, (b) the study of film rhetoric, and (c) selected course readings. These applications draw attention to the act of viewing while providing students the academic discourse of cinematic-rhetorical analysis particular to the film genre they are studying in the course. In this way, Bratton-Hayes and Fischer apply the cinematic-rhetorical analysis of film to prepare their students to understand the relationship between textual construction and rhetorical function, which influence the meaning of the text.

#### *The Codes and Conventions of Film Genre*

According to film-writing scholarship, the study of genre codes and conventions is a simple yet effective way of honing critical viewing skills (Considine & Haley, 1999c; Costanzo, 2004; Teasley & Wilder, 1997). This approach gives students a general overview of film genre, illustrating the relationship between formula and novelty. It also provides them a cinematic-rhetorical method for deconstructing the film text into its various elements. In composition, this teaching practice is especially important to the study of film genre. The application of a critical framework “enables [students] to read

texts closely” (Schmertz & Trefzer, 1999, p. 91). For inexperienced writers, this approach facilitates critical response not only in classroom dialogues but also in academic writing.

Initially, Bratton-Hayes and Fischer take similar approaches to developing critical viewing skills through the study of genre codes and conventions. Both assist their students in defining film genre in terms of student cultural knowledge (e.g., genre expectations and expectations as viewers) and in relation to the films screened in class. Like the scholarship on film study in English and composition, these writing teachers work from a heuristic, a set of questions that generate classroom discussion on the basic elements of film genre: plot, characters, setting, iconography, mood, and cinematic style (Considine & Haley, p. 280; Costanzo, pp. 78-80; Teasley & Wilder, pp. 77-80;). In their composition courses, Bratton-Hayes and Fischer often revisit these questions to frame critical viewing and, by extension, critical response. This step prepares students for cinematic-rhetorical analysis. It emphasizes the relationship between genre and viewer expectations. The questions, which are listed below, have been generated from teacher interviews and classroom observations.

#### *The Suspense Film*

1. What is a suspense film?
2. What makes a movie suspenseful?
3. Who are the characters in these movies?
4. What are the conflicts and how are they resolved?
5. What images and sounds are common to these movies? (2I~9-10)

### *The Western Film*

1. What are the codes of the west?
2. Who are the good guys? The bad guys? How do you know?
3. How is the act of trespassing presented as conflict?
4. How are problems resolved in the west?
5. What images are typical to the western? (1802-4)

As can be gathered from the questions above, Bratton-Hayes and Fischer open with the basic characteristics of film genre. The questions specifically point to genre elements like character, plot, and theme while generally addressing genre features like iconography, mood, and cinematic style. Both heuristics serve as starting points not only for discussing the codes and conventions of genre movies but also for honing critical viewing skills and generating close readings. The questions furthermore address the relationship between film genre and audience expectations, getting students to balance general viewer expectations with what they specifically note in the film selections screened in class. This approach to cinematic-rhetorical analysis activates the process of individual and multiple text analyses.

To meet the needs of their first-year composition students, Bratton-Hayes and Fischer apply their critical viewing heuristics differently. In basic writing, Bratton-Hayes introduces the concept of critical viewing on the first day of class and focuses on this application throughout the term (2I~5). The heuristic is intentionally broad to adapt to student conceptions of the movie genre. Early in the term, Bratton-Hayes and her students generate a list of movies – many of them, suspense horror films – that serve as a basis for defining the codes and conventions of the contemporary form. Based on this

list, she and her students begin to develop a general set of conventions: villains (e.g., killers, monsters, ghosts, demons, zombies, etc.) who pursue their victims (e.g., children, teen, men, women) for known (e.g., the thrill of murder or revenge) or unknown reasons. Bratton-Hayes and her students discuss the fright factor, the uncertainty and anxiety the audience feels when watching these films. They also discuss the elements death and gore, the iconography that now predominates the genre. This classification analysis helps students measure contemporary forms of suspense with a past form, a set of Alfred Hitchcock films, that employs similar codes and conventions but is working within industry production codes (2I~10). Bratton-Hayes' approach is interesting because it gets students thinking about the development of a genre based on the relationship between the industry, genre/filmmaker, and audience – in short, the commercial purposes of this filmmaking (Thoman et al., 2003, p. 27).

Unlike Bratton-Hayes' course application, Fischer develops student critical viewing skills as a component of a four-week unit. The heuristic explores the codes and conventions of the westerns screened in class. Fischer's selection of *All the Pretty Horses*, *The Wild Bunch*, and *Brokeback Mountain* proves fruitful in this regard. As each film is screened, Fischer and his students explore the conventions of the western: the cowboy, the trusted sidekick(s), the 'pure' and 'fallen' woman, the villain, and the iconography (e.g., the Texas-Mexico landscape, horses, guns, hats, etc.) (18O1-4). These characteristics are identified and discussed as a set of genre expectations. These expectations are revisited with each subsequent film. For example, the cowboy as western hero in *All the Pretty Horses* is coupled with the cowboy as western anti-hero in *The Wild Bunch*. These characters are compared and contrasted with the portraits of the

cowboy in *Brokeback Mountain*. Through this analysis, student critical viewing skills are challenged to generate a list of codes of the west based on the films screened in class. Fischer's students must do close readings of the texts: to move beyond cultural folklore mottos like "An eye for an eye," "Only the strong survive," and "Every man for himself" (1803~14). When these texts are considered collectively, these westerns are also grounded in friendship, loyalty, and trust. The students restructure their initial understandings of the western and the cowboy code to reflect the films' other messages: "It's all for one and one for all" and "Never leave a man behind" (1803~15). In this way, Fischer's students are reminded to think comprehensively regarding film genre. The western as a kind of composition includes both portraits of the cowboy in its past and current films.

During the classroom observations, I found the cases' approach to cinematic-rhetorical analysis effective in two ways. First, it presses students to form their own definitions of film genre. This practice activates the cultural knowledge students have regarding this particular movie kind (Considine & Haley, p. 279b). Second, it provides a lens in which to read, interpret, and analyze film genre. The participants' heuristics develop critical viewing skills, raising student awareness of its unique textual construction and its contribution to meaning. The articulation of genre codes and conventions requires students to apply critical discourse to analyze the elements that create and shape a genre film. It introduces the notion of genre as composition, consisting of parts that contribute to an argument.



## *Film Rhetoric*

To continue building on the heuristic and academic discourse presented in the last section, the practitioners also introduce students to film rhetoric, the cinematic-rhetorical techniques directors use to communicate through film. According to scholarship and research, this aspect of critical viewing presses students to think beyond film narrative and draws attention to its devices and strategies (Corrigan, 2004; Fehlman, 1994; Golden, 2001; Guista, 1992; Krueger & Christel, 2001; Schmertz, 2001; Turner, 1999). The study of film rhetoric is often accompanied by a demonstration and a discussion of these techniques. In their classrooms, Bratton-Hayes and Fischer apply similar teaching methods to press their students to become active viewers. The participants help their students articulate the relationship among the aural, visual, and verbal as components working simultaneously to form meaning and influence genre arguments. This instruction of cinematic-rhetorical analysis facilitates close readings while drawing on student film literacies to foster critical response and, by extension, academic literacy.

In her basic writing course, Bratton-Hayes applies two methods for introducing film rhetoric. As a part of genre codes and conventions, Question Two from the heuristic turns student attention toward the elements that the suspense genre uses to create feelings of uncertainty, anxiety, fear, and terror. As a matter of course, Bratton-Hayes and her students discuss the rhetoric of film. Terms like *casting*, *lighting*, *music*, and *editing* are essential elements forming and shaping viewer response and film meaning. In addition to these techniques, she also discusses the importance of *script* (story, pacing, tone, mood), *acting style* (body posturing, facial expressions, voice intonations/accents), *sound* (diegetic and nondiegetic sound), *visual costuming* (clothing as integral to genre and

lifestyle), *location/setting* (integral to genre and lifestyle), *action shots* (movement, special effects), and *film stock* (color, black-white film). By midterm, Bratton-Hayes believes her students have internalized this discourse and are prepared to learn more about film rhetoric. Through classroom observations, I found that she undertakes this goal through assigned reading and the close study of a film clip. The class reads “Moving pictures: Writing to tell stories,” a chapter from the composition textbook *Beyond words: Reading and writing in a visual age*” (Ruszkiewicz et al., 2006, pp. 246-263, 278-281, 314-318). Bratton-Hayes explains how images (e.g., pictures, photographs, ads, films, etc.) are composed through *arrangement*, *framing*, *lighting*, and *camera angle*. These features are related to *mise-en-scene*, an element important to a film’s visual style. The discussion on film rhetoric provides students a common vocabulary or discourse to discuss Hitchcock films and other movies (2I~9; 2O7~1-2).

To apply this critical viewing methodology, Bratton-Hayes and her students examine sample movie stills from *Beyond words* and a scene from *Vertigo*, a movie about a San Francisco detective who becomes obsessed with a friend’s wife while investigating her strange activities. At this class session, Bratton-Hayes revisits the ending sequence of the film (about two minutes) to complete a close reading of the scene. In the clip, Scottie Ferguson, a detective, confronts his lover Judy Barton, an accomplice to murder and to emotional deceit, regarding the death of Madeline Elster. At a mission near San Francisco, Scottie forces Judy to retrace the steps of the murder. He forces Judy up the church bell tower, explaining how he believes the murder took place and how Judy was instrumental in impersonating Madeline to distract him. When Judy gives her alibi (i.e., that she did not know Madeline would be killed), a noise and shadow startles her, causing

her to leap from the tower. This tragic fall ends the film, leaving Scottie with unanswered questions.

As a class, Bratton-Hayes and her students discuss Hitchcock's use of cinematic-rhetorical technique. In their close reading, they first address the narrative aspects of the scene. Bratton-Hayes draws attention to the manner in which Hitchcock presents Judy's death. The horrific occurs suddenly, challenging viewer expectations. It is a *What?* moment that viewers participate in, a scene Bratton-Hayes wants her students to analyze. Through Judy's fall, the students as viewers are reminded of Madeline's death in bright light, an event that occurs earlier in the movie. Unlike Madeline, the students do not see Judy's body sprawled on the ground. Her death is masked by darkness. This cinematic-rhetorical technique keeps suspense in the shadows while the presentation of Madeline's death brings suspense to the light. For students, the time of Judy's death (i.e., evening) brings finality to Hitchcock's narrative. It also brings Scottie's symptoms of acrophobia to a close.

During these class proceedings, a few students recall the feelings of vertigo Scottie experiences before the film's ending. They comment how these feelings are reinforced through the spiraling staircase in the bell tower and the effects of selective camera angles and movements (e.g., the high camera angle and dolly shot). For these students, the staircase and the camera techniques represent Scottie's fear of heights and his frenzied emotional state. Based on this film rhetoric, Bratton-Hayes' students posit that *Vertigo* is about the psychological and sexual fear of women and the need to exercise power over them. The interpretation is confirmed when students are reminded genre conventions: the representation of women as victims. The application of cinematic-

rhetorical discourse – film rhetoric, in particular – helps students understand the psychological intensity of Hitchcock’s *Vertigo*. It also encourages them to contextualize the film along a continuum of suspense horror films that include this treatment of women as an integral component of the film genre (201~7-8; Corrigan & White, 2004, p. 309; Lehman & Luhr, 2003, p. 85; Sapolsky & Molitor, 1996, p. 35-38).

Like Bratton-Hayes, Fischer generates a cinematic-rhetorical discourse with his students to discuss film rhetoric and to complete close readings of the film selections. By way of conversation, Fischer and his students draw attention to a set of cinematic techniques that are used to create genre and argument. They largely focus on *plot*, *casting*, *setting*, and *soundtrack* but also consider *acting style*, *costuming*, and *props*. As a class, they discuss how film rhetoric is central to cueing audience expectations in the western. For example, the fact that Billy Bob Thornton has cast Matt Damon as John Grady Cole, the western hero, is important to *All the Pretty Horses*. Damon’s filmography generally consists of intelligent and sincere young men (e.g., Will Hunting in *Good Will Hunting* [1997], James Ryan in *Saving Private Ryan* [1998], and Bryan Woodman in *Syriana* [2005]). For students, his movies and celebrity status indicate the kind of character Cole is supposed to be. When Damon is shown onscreen, the students are sympathetic to his character – his pursuit of western traditions in Mexico and his love for Alejandra de la Rocha (1801~9). In addition, the filmography also cues student expectations regarding the character’s outcome. The students know Cole must survive the obstacles he undergoes in Mexico because the character is played by a known celebrity. They know that Thornton would not “kill” a central character (as Hitchcock does in *Vertigo*) to challenge audience expectations. *All the Pretty Horses* is a western

and a coming-of-age story. The audience wants to know how Cole will change as the movie progresses. In this way, casting is an element of film rhetoric that contributes to a film's argument along with reinforcing western conventions of the cowboy.

During these class sessions, this approach to film rhetoric is also coupled with another method in Fischer's freshman composition course. At film screenings, Fischer is apt to pause a movie to focus student critical viewing/reading. In these instances, he poses a question to his students on an upcoming moment in the film. This question is later considered during classroom discussion. As a class, Fischer and his students delve into the scene, identifying the components of film rhetoric that communicate the film's meaning. For example, during *All the Pretty Horses*, Fischer paused the film on two occasions, one of these looked specifically at the moment when Cole first sees Alejandra, a wealthy rancher's daughter. The scene presents Cole and other ranchers rounding up cattle when, out of this group, rides Alejandra in slow motion. Over the year he has taught this western, Fischer believes the scene is also instrumental to introducing the concept of film rhetoric to students. He poses the same question to each class and, during the classroom observation, asked his students to consider: "Is this love at first sight? How do you know?" In class, Fischer and his students address the scene. They call attention to the camera spinning around Cole – how it is suggestive of his state of mind, that he is falling in love. They talk about the still camera shot of Alejandra on horseback, her long flowing hair, and the smile on her face (18O1~3, 14). Based on a close reading of these cinematic-rhetorical techniques, the students come to the conclusion that this film moment represents love at first sight. The students discuss how Cole is presented in this and other scenes as being mesmerized by Alejandra (18O1). This moment in *All the*

*Pretty Horses* is important for launching classroom dialogues on love and its compromises and how historical context and setting affect love's fruition in the western genre.

As a part of cinematic-rhetorical analysis, this instruction of film rhetoric calls students to examine closely the languages and technologies filmmakers use to communicate meaning. To be successful, students must shift from apprehending to comprehending the text (paraphrase, Considine & Haley, 1999c). They must move from passive to active viewing. I found that this shift develops student critical viewing skills and begins to articulate the connections between the filmmaker and writer along with the relationship among film, writing, and argument. Through this particular critical viewing methodology, Bratton-Hayes and Fischer challenge their students to consider issues other than film narrative: the rhetorical purpose of film construction and its contribution to film meaning (21~23; Dunbar-Odom, 1999, p. 52).

### *Course Readings*

The final section on critical viewing focuses on the course readings related to the film selections in the writing practitioners' classrooms. The readings discussed in this section include a selection of critical articles, movie reviews, and works of fiction. These assignments balance the instruction of film in composition (Miners & Pascopella, 2007). The readings are useful in extending student knowledge and experience with written texts. In first-year composition, these readings like the film selections generate further discussion on cinematic-rhetorical analysis (e.g., the construction and function of film genre). They guide critical viewing as well as inform and develop critical response

(Costanzo, 2004, pp. 117-118; Haspel, 2002, pp. 250-252). The readings present yet another way in which to understand genre films as interpretations or as kinds of composition that are written by filmmakers. The practitioners' inclusion of these readings helps students make connections between film, writing, and argument.

In basic writing, Bratton-Hayes assigns three readings for honing critical viewing. These are short essays on Hitchcock: "Film stories of the twentieth century" (Ruszkiewicz et al., 2006, pp. 278-281), "Last laugh: Was Hitchcock's masterpiece a private joke?" (Locke, 1997), and "Hitchcock's use of profiles in *Vertigo*" (Baird, n.d.). For Bratton-Hayes, the articles get students thinking about the suspense genre as a whole and Hitchcock's contribution to the suspense genre. The first piece, "Film stories," pays tribute to Hitchcock as a master filmmaker of his day and of the century. It touches on the cinematic innovations and narrative experiments that have influenced contemporary and current filmmakers. Bratton-Hayes assigns this excerpt from *Beyond words* in order to contextualize Hitchcock along a suspense genre continuum. Through this reading, she and her students consider current films that apply his filmmaking techniques (203~2).

The next two articles, "Last laugh" and "Profiles in *Vertigo*," further delve into Hitchcock's movies, focusing on narrative structure and visual composition. The articles raise questions regarding this director's work:

- How is Hitchcock unconventional in his manner of storytelling?
- What is his purpose in presenting narrative information and composing the image in this way?

- How does this storytelling make you feel as a viewer?
- How does this manner of storytelling stand against other films in the genre?

(2O1~7, 9)

The discussion of these questions couple the study of Hitchcock narratives with the study of his style – how visual methods of storytelling communicate and how viewers are challenged to reason through plot twists (2I~7; 2O1~7-8). To Bratton-Hayes, these reading assignments press students to deconstruct the image and to think comprehensively about suspense in the movies and, particularly, about the cinematic-rhetorical methods filmmakers use to create arguments.

While Bratton-Hayes uses articles to guide and develop student critical viewing, Fischer includes two short readings – assignments from the beginning of the term – and the novel *All the pretty horses* (1993). These readings tie into the discussion on *All the Pretty Horses*, *The Wild Bunch*, and *Brokeback Mountain*. The first set of readings, Tobias Wolff’s “On being a real westerner” and Anatasia Toufexis’ “Love: The right chemistry,” introduces students to “the culture of firsts,” a theme apparent in *All the pretty Horses* and in each movie (Axelrod & Cooper, 1997, pp. 26-28, 159-161). Both help students consider the existential situations of the characters (18I~4; 18O1~8; 18O2~14). Wolff’s short story and Toufexis’ article present a series of topics for exploration: the image of the cowboy and its relation to codes of masculinity, the idea of love as a physiological process or a cultural construct, and the gendered constitutions of love and longing in relationships. Topics like these promote classroom dialogues on gender. Fischer uses the students’ personal and textual responses as an opportunity to form critical responses to character and character types in these westerns.



In addition to this preparation, Fischer also integrates Cormac McCarthy's novel *All the pretty horses* as a part of critical viewing. It is Fischer's belief that film and literature are kinds of composition (18I~4). In his class, he presents Thornton's film as an interpretation of the novel. This course reading is integrally linked to the discussion of the film. Fischer and his students return to key moments in each text (e.g., Cole's first sighting of Alejandra and his first meeting with Hector and Alfonsa de la Rocha) to explore the choices the writer and the director make to create and shape meaning and form arguments. Questions central to this discussion are

- How has the filmmaker decided to highlight a key moment?
- How does the director turn description into camera work?
- How has the filmmaker adapted dialogue from the novel? (18I~5; 18O1~9-10, 14)

Questions like these are important to the discussion of trespassing as a western genre code and convention. They are also essential to the study of ideological representation in both texts. McCarthy's novel gives students an opportunity to compare and contrast character representation and their struggles for power in the west. It is Fischer's belief that screening the film raises student interest in the novel, and visa versa. Both readings allow Fischer and his students to explore how texts position readers/viewers.

Through teacher interviews and classroom observations, I learned that the application of these course readings and other critical viewing methods helps students understand film genre as composition. These practices offer students different ways in which to access the film text. Students learn to read, interpret, discuss, and analyze film through a cinematic-rhetorical approach. Though initially using similar teaching

practices, Bratton-Hayes and Fischer work with different methods to meet the needs of their students and the particular goals of basic writing and freshman composition, respectively. By developing student critical viewing skills, the practitioners widen the scope of personal schemata and sharpen critical response, which builds student film and academic literacies (Kasper, 1999; Vetrie, 2004).

### *Classroom Dialogues*

In basic writing and freshman composition, critical viewing methods prepare students for classroom dialogues in cinematic-rhetorical analysis. During classroom observations, I found Bratton-Hayes and Fischer effective in fostering student engagement in classroom discussions. Casual conversations on the social practice of film are balanced by analytical discussions of genre film as text (2I~6, 10, 13; 18I~3). In this way, the pleasure of social practice facilitates the pleasure of sharing personal knowledge and of partaking in academic discussions (Considine & Haley, p. 26a-b; Dombeck & Herndon, 2004, p. 108; Masterman, 1985, p. 224). For the participants, these classroom dialogues point to a key concept: the idea of film as argument. Like other media, genre films are texts that express a point of view on cultural and political issues (Berlin, 1991, 1996; Bordwell & Thompson, 2001; Corrigan & White, 2004; Giroux, 2002; Lehman & Luhr, 2003; Lunsford et al., 2001, p. 4). In the cultural studies writing pedagogy, this concept is significant. It establishes a rhetorical context between the filmmaker and the viewer that is similar to the relationship between the writer and the reader (Schmertz & Trefzer, 1999, p. 96). It also reinforces the idea of film genre as composition, a movie form consisting of a set of characteristics that conform to or depart from audience

expectations. In the classroom, dialogues on these topics pave the way for discussions on the broad connections among film, writing, and argument. As a class, the cases and their students make connections between and among texts, using modes of discourse analysis (e.g., definition, exemplification, and comparison-and-contrast analyses) to create their own arguments. In the end, both writing teachers achieve positive student responses while developing the critical thinking skills that are important to academic literacy.

For Bratton-Hayes, a pedagogical objective in basic writing is to demonstrate how texts construct arguments. Film genre provides a concrete model for discussing this objective in composition. This movie kind addresses the subject of rhetorical contexts: the content, purpose, audience, language, etc. both genre films and written texts use to communicate. In the classroom, the suspense horror film is approached as academic argument, a text consisting of an introduction, a set of supporting points, and a conclusion. Critical response depends on the students' ability to connect film structure to essay structure. By taking this approach to textual analysis, Bratton-Hayes reinforces important media literacy tenets: that films, like written texts, are constructions created to attract audiences and to communicate messages (Thoman et al., 2003, p. 23-4, 26). This analysis facilitates classroom discussions on textual positioning in genre films while revisiting the concept of formula and novelty – both of which influence Hollywood filmmaking.

In an effort to provide more information regarding this teaching practice, I have constructed my discussion on classroom dialogues based on Hitchcock's *Vertigo*. Through a close reading of the entire film and film clips, Bratton-Hayes begins illustrating the broad connections among film, writing, and argument. This textual

analysis opens with a closer look at the opening of the film. Like the introduction to an essay, the title sequence of a film is critical to attracting audiences. For this discussion, Bratton-Hayes and her students review *Vertigo*'s title sequence to decipher the cinematic-rhetorical devices and strategies Hitchcock applies to prepare his audience for the bizarre love story that will follow. This film clip is brief (about two minutes long). The students recognize that this opening immediately catches their attention by evoking the feeling of hypnosis (paraphrase, 201~6). The "quiz-show music" that opens the title sequence is surreal (201~6). It induces audience members into a trance-like state. The camera framing of a woman's face (e.g., from cheek to lips to eyes to eye) not only focuses attention to the slight movements of the woman's eye but also prepares the audience to enter a different state of mind. The change in screen color from a muted color pallet to red (e.g., through a camera filter) transitions the audience from the real world to the surreal world of the film. A moving spirograph that appears at the center of the woman's eye and, later, dominates the screen also moves the audience toward an altered consciousness. Based on this title sequence, the students conclude that Hitchcock has prepared his viewers for the changes in psychological perception that affect the characters in *Vertigo* (201~6).

In the classroom, cinematic-rhetorical analysis also focuses on the connections between film structure and essay structure. If the title sequence in a film like *Vertigo* is like the opening of an academic essay, Bratton-Hayes believes *Vertigo*'s two-part structure are points in Hitchcock's argument on skewed perspectives and shifting realities (201~6; 206~11-14). After watching the film, the students freewrite on each film segment in *Vertigo*. Bratton-Hayes and her students negotiate where these sections begin

and end. While it would make sense that the first part of *Vertigo* opens after the title sequence, a selection of students believe this is not the case. At this point, Hitchcock has not introduced viewers to the film's ideas, the characters, and to Scottie's vertigo condition (201~7). The opening scene where Scottie is pursuing a criminal across apartment rooftops is part of Hitchcock's introduction. The quality of this opening sequence is dreamlike – similar to the title sequence (201~7). For this group of students, the first part opens when Scottie is approached by a friend, Gavin Elster, to investigate his wife's strange activities and ends with her death from a church bell tower. The students agree that the second part of the film opens with Scottie's pursuit of Judy, a woman sharing a striking resemblance to Madeline Elster. This segment ends with Judy's death from the same tower.

Although students recognize *Vertigo*'s two-part structure, the film poses a challenge for them. Bratton-Hayes focuses on this Hitchcock film to analyze its meaning. The two segments are supporting points in an argument. These film segments are complex, positioning and repositioning viewer responses. In Part One, the viewer shares Scottie's point of view. The students discuss that they, too, are attempting to figure out Madeline's behavior. As viewers, they see her through his eyes (Locke, 1997). Madeline is a classic beauty with whom Scottie falls in love. He wants to prevent her suicide, but his attempts are unsuccessful. He takes her to the mission where she leaps from the bell tower. In Part Two, the students are cued into Judy's perspective. They find out her motivations for helping Elster, the man who has killed his wife. The students are sympathetic to her frustration towards an obsessed Scottie who he remakes her into Madeline's image: from the tidy grey suit to the spiral updo (201~6). Judy allows

herself to be transformed in order to help Scottie and to earn his love. The students note how Hitchcock balances point of view in *Vertigo* but repositions them, once again, when Scottie has completed Judy's transformation. Like the spirograph in the film's title sequence, the room spins around as Scottie kisses her (201~6). This experience is representative of his consuming love for the deceased Madeline. According to the students, Scottie's subjective point of view is maintained for the remainder of the film (e.g., the flashback to past experiences with Madeline and the repeated acrophobic camera shot) (201~7-8). Like Scottie, they are aghast at the horror of Judy's death. Through discussion, the students revisit these parts to understand Hitchcock's methods of creating suspense and film argument.

Though aware of the cinematic-rhetorical intention of Hitchcock's ending, the students are left with questions regarding the meaning of *Vertigo*. Bratton-Hayes wants her students to resolve the film's argument. To understand the film better, she and her students consider genre codes and conventions in two Hitchcock films. Like *Rope*, *Vertigo* presents the horrific in plain sight: "Death is exposed for the viewers to see" (201~7). Both movies treat death in disturbing, matter-of-fact tones. Like *Marnie*, *Vertigo* explores the characters' fears of the opposite sex (206~12). Though there is playful romantic tension between the male and female leads, there also exists a suspicion of women. The male characters in *Marnie* and *Vertigo* exert control over women through psychological and physical force and transformation. Although Hitchcock's film is sympathetic to Judy in presenting her subjective point of view, the film is framed by Scottie's opening and closing perspective. His is the first and the last word. In the ending sequence, Scottie wants to rid himself of the past that haunts him. To do so, he

must not only face his fear of heights, but also challenge Judy. Her death puts an end to the psychological and sexual hold Madeline/Judy has over him. Although *Vertigo* is complex in its presentation of suspense and its sense of horror, the subtext of the film leads Bratton-Hayes and her students to conclude that this movie is about the psychological impact of intimacy in male-female relationships (206~12).

For Bratton-Hayes' students, this treatment of women in suspense and suspense horror movies continues today. They realize that this subtext has been taken to its logical extreme over the years in genre movies like *Wolf Creek* (2005), *Hostel* (2005), and *Silent Hill* (2006) – horror films that relish in grotesque bloodshed, repulsive imagery, and, in some cases, torture porn. These movies are not just straight horror films but ideological in their references to gender. Several students understand that these current trends in the genre are not essential to the composition of the suspense horror film but that the film industry continues to produce these films to attract audiences through special effects and violent imagery (203~2; 206~15). In this classroom, a cinematic-rhetorical approach helps students identify the connections between film, writing, and argument; the relationship between genre formula and novelty; and this relationship's influence on the industry and production.

Like Bratton-Hayes' basic writing course, Fischer's freshman composition class is also structured to promote classroom dialogues on the cinematic-rhetorical analysis of film. These classroom dialogues serve an important pedagogical goal in the course. They offer students the opportunity to identify, discuss, and analyze the codes and conventions of a film genre. During these conversations, Fischer and his students engage in modes of discourse analysis: definition and comparison-contrast analyses. The

classroom dialogues also introduce students to an important media literacy tenet: that films are highly constructed texts embedded with ideological values and points of view (Thoman et al., pp. 24, 26). In freshman composition, the study of the western, like the study of the suspense horror film, is loaded with subtext, which is grounded in the cinematic-rhetorical choices filmmakers make to communicate film arguments. Fischer challenges his students to respond critically to the way aural-visual texts represent complex arguments on power, race, class, gender, and sexual orientation. This goal is accomplished through the following practices: by presenting the notion of *trespassing* as a common genre convention in the western and by examining the ideological value given to this convention in *All the Pretty Horses*, *The Wild Bunch*, and *Brokeback Mountain*. As the following analysis of Fischer's observations illustrate, both practices enable students to complete close ideological readings of the film selections.

To begin classroom dialogues, Fischer opens with the discussion of a common western convention. Students are familiar with the western genre, the story of adventure and freedom on the western landscape. They may also be familiar with its alternative reading: the story of trespassing. For Fischer, the first step in fostering critical response is to encourage students to define the word *trespassing* in their own terms. For the students, the notion of trespassing takes different forms. In its most obvious form, trespassing is an intrusion on someone else's land or property. This kind of trespass is liable to punishments: *Trespassers will be prosecuted* and *Trespassers will be shot* (18O2~2-3). The students believe these cultural signs on trespassing are ways of defining and protecting boundaries and territories. It is a direct form of trespassing people commit deliberately or by accident (18O2~3). In its less obvious form,



trespassing is also a physical and an emotional offense that infringes on a person's ability to act or that affronts his or her social-cultural values. Under this definition, the students identify the human body as property and skin as a kind of boundary (18O2~3). They believe body language and facial expression can welcome or rebuff the advances of an interested party. For students, this concept of trespassing is indirect, having to do with emotions like trust, respect, friendship, and love. It is also associated with beliefs and values that serve as rules and boundaries of right conduct or of good character (18O2~3-4). Unlike the first definition, this act of trespassing recognizes human error and can lead to forgiveness: *Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us* (18O2~3). In culture, these binary definitions of the word *trespassing* exist side by side. This dialogue on the word's meaning serves as a cinematic-rhetorical framework in which to read, discuss, and analyze the western film genre. Fischer's students form arguments based on this genre convention.

Because *All the Pretty Horses* serves as a foundational text to discuss *The Wild Bunch* and *Brokeback Mountain*, Fischer and his students revisit this film throughout the unit. A cinematic-rhetorical approach gives students an opportunity to compare and contrast various film arguments. In the first comparison, the students look at *All the Pretty Horses* and *The Wild Bunch* – movies set during the decline of the west – to understand the character motivations for trespassing against lands, properties, and borders. The characters, Cole and his sidekick in *All the Pretty Horses* and Pike Bishop and his infamous crew in *The Wild Bunch*, cross the American-Mexican border to find refuge from the threat of city life. Though the desire for the old west links the two movies, Fischer's students note the different motivations for crossing the Rio Grande

River. In *All the Pretty Horses*, the act of trespassing functions as a new beginning, a kind of baptism. Cole and his friend, Lacey Rawlins, are in search of a romanticized west. These young men leave home with only a few provisions: their horses, guns, and food. They are looking for hard work on a Mexican ranch (1803~12). The students contrast this motivation from *All the Pretty Horses* with the incentive for crossing the Rio Grande in *The Wild Bunch*, a movie about a group of aging outlaws who wish to retire after pulling a big heist. According to the students, Pike and his men, the cowboy antiheroes, are heading for Mexico to escape the authorities and to reap the benefits of an easier way of life (1803~7). For these cowboys, the Rio Grande is entrance to a land of freedom, a world without law and order. To the class, trespassing across borders is a way for these men to exercise their autonomy. Through this act, the cowboy maintains his independence, an important genre code in the western film.

A cinematic-rhetorical analysis of film helps students not only discuss how trespassing is a deliberate act, but also distinguish the differing cultural codes of the American and Mexican west. These representations of cultural codes are not without ideological significance. The students argue that, in crossing the Rio Grande, these westerners have not fully internalized the cultural differences that exist between Texan and Mexican law, an oversight that causes *them* physical injury. For the most part, *All the Pretty Horses* and *The Wild Bunch* present unfavorable portraits of the Mexican west. The students compare the films' parallel portraits of a country without justice. In 1949 Mexico, Cole and Rawlins find themselves jailed and tortured when falsely accused of horse stealing. Jimmy Blevins, a runaway who the young men befriend in their travels, does not fair so well. He is executed for horse stealing and murder. The authorities – in

particular, the captain – have a ruthless sense of justice: executing people without due process, falsifying case information, misplacing important documents, taking bribes, etc. Much like *All the Pretty Horses*' portrait, *The Wild Bunch*'s 1914 Mexico is in complete chaos. The Federales who have seized the country raid village communities for horses, guns, food, and women. The villagers have no recourse. The planes, cars, and weaponry the corrupt Federale general, Mapache, acquires reinforces his powerful stature in the country. Mapache is prepared to shoot down anyone who challenges him, including Pike and his men when they attempt to avenge the death of a fellow cowboy.

Of course, these cinematic-rhetorical readings of *All the Pretty Horses* and *The Wild Bunch* have an impact on critical viewing and the development of film argument. Although the students discuss the similar portraits, they do not question the ideological values inherent in their own readings of these films, which concerns Fischer. Many of his students are Latinos. To make his students aware of Hollywood's transmission of ideological values, Fischer questions if the representations of Mexico are accurate (18O3~12). Students are challenged to reconsider their understandings of the Mexican west: "Nothing is good in Mexico" and "Don't go to Mexico" (18O3~12, 14). Fischer's students must come to terms that these representations are stereotypes (18O3~12). Although both films portray a beautiful Mexican landscape, life in this country is cruel. Its people resolve issues through guns and violence. The films suggest the idea of justice as never having been in Mexico. Being foreigners who have trespassed, the characters in *All the Pretty Horses* and *The Wild Bunch* do not have legal recourse for resolving matters. They are shot for moving across borders and for not abiding by the rules and boundaries of the land. Those with power are prepared to thwart law enforcement. The

students realize that the idea of justice is attached to the iconography of the west: guns, shootouts, and murder (1803). In this way, Fischer helps his students realize how these representations filter into textual readings of the west in Mexico and, by extension, current-day understandings of Mexico. Although these representations of race, ethnicity, and culture are efficient visuals in storytelling, Fischer and his students believe the film industry needs to move beyond these iconographic stereotypes. Here, the study of cinematic-rhetorical analysis helps students make informed evaluations regarding the production of ideological values.

Fischer not only pairs up *All the Pretty Horses* with *The Wild Bunch*, but he also couples this film with *Brokeback Mountain*. A cinematic-rhetorical analysis of these films helps students develop film arguments on gender. In this second comparison, Fischer and his students explore the notion of trespassing in relationships. Both westerns present students portraits of gender in mid- to late-twentieth centuries Mexico and America, respectively. The characters Cole and Alejandra in *All the Pretty Horses* and Ennis Del Mar and Jack Twist in *Brokeback Mountain* move toward and against genre conventions in respect to gender roles and behaviors. This cinematic-rhetorical analysis begins with *All the Pretty Horses*. In this film, Cole falls in love with Alejandra, a rancher's daughter who is both the "pure" and "fallen" woman as this western unfolds. Fischer's students recognize the code of femininity Alejandra must adhere to as a young woman in 1949 Mexico: "[I]t's important that she's pure because she's a girl" (1801~9). They know her family, especially her Aunt Alfonsa, aims to keep this disciplinary structure in place so that Alejandra is not spoken ill of or made unmarriageable (paraphrase, 1801~9). Alfonsa's rules and regulations, however, run contrary to

Alejandra's intention: her attraction to Cole and her desire to be with him. Although the class is undecided whether or not Alejandra "truly" loves Cole (e.g., Is it a summer romance or genuine love?), they do realize that that she has trespassed against femininity codes of proper conduct for a well-to-do woman in Mexico. This analysis of gender requires students to consider the cultural and historical context of the characters in *All the Pretty Horses*.

By applying genre codes and conventions, the students also examine the concept of the cowboy and masculinity in *Brokeback Mountain*, a movie about two men who fall in love in late 1960s/early 1970s rural America. In this western, the code of the cowboy is paradoxically upheld and challenged. The students note that Ennis and Jack are both rugged cowboys who are ranch-hands for hire (1804~10). Ennis, in particular, is the strong, silent type, the classic lone cowboy. The students note that, as male western characters, Ennis and Jack are unlike the men in *All the Pretty Horses* (and *The Wild Bunch*) who, for the most part, travel in small groups. Although Ennis longs for Jack's companionship, he is especially fearful of the social-cultural and emotional repercussions of this relationship. To prevent himself from trespassing, he isolates himself from the company of other people, including his family. Both men, especially Ennis, are protective of their masculinity. Fischer's students acknowledge the way both men interact. Like the cowboys in *All the Pretty Horses* (and *The Wild Bunch*), they express their loyalty and affection by throwing punches and cursing at one another (1804). Like many people who have seen the film, the students believe both men trespass against western genre codes of masculinity in cultivating an ongoing affair (1804~13). The

students recognize that the film's argument challenges viewers to see the cowboy from a new perspective.

In completing a cinematic-rhetorical analysis of gender in these films, the students also examine the act of trespassing as a series of broken promises. In *All the Pretty Horses*, Alejandra is caught between her competing need to please Cole and her family. Fischer's dialogue question, "Did Alejandra make the right decision?," opens multiple conversations on her decision to break her promise to both her family and Cole. When Alejandra does not abide by gender expectations in preserving her virginity, her family forces her to promise she will never see Cole again. Being 1949 Mexico, Rocha and Alfonsa place Cole's life at risk (e.g., sending him to jail for horse stealing) to protect Alejandra's honor (18O1~8-9). The students argue that Alejandra breaks her promise to her family when she decides to meet Cole for one last time (18O1~12; 18O2~12). Her decision to elope with him is also problematic in their eyes. According to Fischer's students, Alejandra is appeasing Cole for the moment. She is not serious about eloping in Texas because she is more concerned about maintaining her honor – whatever she has left – to win back her father's confidence and love. In this act, a few go as far as to say that Alejandra is reckless with Cole's heart, trespassing by giving him false hopes (18O2~12).

For *Brokeback Mountain*, Fischer and his students also explore the concept of trespassing as broken promises. Like Alejandra and Cole, Ennis and Jack are trespassed upon by social-cultural standards, a society that is not ready to accept homosexuality. In the course of their cinematic-rhetorical readings, however, several students believe that both characters are trespassers in "their decision to get married" and have children (18O4~12). Their vows with the inclusion of *The Lord's Prayer* (i.e., *Forgive us our*

*trespasses...*) as a part of their marriage ceremonies is a promise Ennis and Jack have made to their spouses and to God (18O4~13). Although these students recognize the characters' need to find comfort in their lives, the decision to continue a long-time affair is a broken promise of fidelity. For one student, this situation regarding homosexuality is worse. The characters' sexual orientation is "bigger than just cheating"; both men are misrepresenting themselves throughout their marriage (18O4~14). In the film, their trespasses do not include forgiveness. Jack is punished with extreme prejudice. Even though the characters in *All the Pretty Horses* and *Brokeback Mountain* are responding to human need and emotion, none are forgiven for their trespasses of the heart.

Certainly, these cinematic-rhetorical readings on gender and sexual orientation are challenging topics for the students in freshman composition. *All the Pretty Horses* and *Brokeback Mountain* are imbricated in social-cultural and political arrangements. For dialogues on gender, Fischer facilitates student conversations through simple yet pointed questions: "Do your parents treat you differently because you're the oldest or the youngest child? Because you are male or female?" (18O3~15-16) These questions draw on cultural experiences of fair treatment and double standards, which impact the students' arguments on the codes of femininity in *All the Pretty Horses*. Students recall their frustration at being held accountable to standards that were simply based on age and gender, rather than maturity and trust. They realize that, like Alejandra's relationship with her family, these relations are grounded in complicated cultural gender codes that are challenging for individuals to reform. Students face similar ideas when analyzing sexual-orientation codes in *Brokeback Mountain*. For this controversial film, Fischer frames classroom dialogues around a set of questions:

- What's the difference?
- Two men kissing?
- Two men kissing passionately?
- Two actors kissing?
- An image of two actors kissing onscreen? (18O4~3)

These questions prepare students to address the film's subject matter. Attempting to answer these questions, one student explains: "It's a cultural convention to accept male-female relationships while rejecting others. When you start opening up the conversation to homosexuality, it's controversial. You get into philosophical and religious beliefs. People tend to feel these deeply and have a tough time moving from a set of beliefs" (18O4~3-4). During classroom dialogues, a group of students work from this set of questions and the student explanation to comment on and challenge the unfair treatment and double standards homosexuals experience in American society. These questions enlarge the cultural context of both films so that students understand them as political texts.

As this analysis of classroom dialogues show, Fischer and his students deconstruct a selection of western films using a cinematic-rhetorical approach. The classroom dialogues on the act of trespassing reveal the ideological nature of the genre film. Through this genre convention, students explore the lifestyles, values, and points of view embedded in *All the Pretty Horses*, *The Wild Bunch*, and *Brokeback Mountain*. As constructed texts, these films offer the complex ideological representations of power, culture, race, gender, and sexual orientation. For this reason, the western film is an instrumental text in teaching students about the rhetorical nature of film and other



popular media (Berlin, 1991, 1996; Giroux, 2002; Thoman et al., 2003). It also is an important tool in teaching students about composition. The western film genre facilitates classroom dialogues on film argument. Through the application of cinematic-rhetorical analysis, students create, form, and test their own arguments on film. This textual analysis is an important exercise that prepares students for the final assignment that completes the unit: academic writing.

The classroom dialogues presented in this section are just a few among other discussions the writing practitioners' and their students have when considering the cinematic-rhetorical elements of film. On one level, these conversations engage students in an examination of film genre, argument construction, and ideological analysis. Students develop critical and academic literacy practices promoted in cultural studies-media literacy pedagogy (Dombeck & Herndon, 2004; Krueger, 1998; Maloney & Miller, 1999; Schmertz, 2001; Wood, 1998; Worsnop, 1999). On another level, these dialogues challenge students to address the general principles of composition (e.g., writer, argument, purpose, structure, audience, etc.) and apply mode of discourse analysis (e.g., definition, illustration, and comparison-and-contrast analyses) between and among the film selections and/or genre films. In the process, these classrooms exhibit a genuine exchange of ideas and information. Bratton-Hayes and Fischer are excellent at fostering student investment and authentic dialogues. The students respond in kind, drawing on a wide film reference. Through film genre in composition, the practitioners use this reference to hone critical thinking skills and student critical responses to texts.

### *Writing Prompts*

For the practitioners, the critical viewing methods and classroom dialogues provide students a number of ways to read, understand, and interpret the film selections. This preparation eventually culminates in academic writing on film genre. In their composition classrooms, Bratton-Hayes and Fischer have developed writing assignments that naturally grow from the film selections, course materials, and classroom dialogues. The writing prompts require students to apply cinematic-rhetorical analysis in order to continue honing critical responses to the suspense horror and the western genre, respectively. These assignments are similar to the film-writing assignments discussed in *Great films and how to teach them* and *Reel conversations: Reading films with young adults*, two professional development texts presenting various ways in which film study can be integrated into English studies (Costanzo, 2004; Teasley & Wilder, 1997). Like this scholarship, the practitioners' writing assignments develop the critical thinking skills that are integral to cinematic-rhetorical analysis and, by extension, to a critical academic literacy.

In their composition courses, the participants present the writing process as a tool for creating and shaping argument. Throughout the term or unit, Bratton-Hayes and Fischer give their students opportunities to reflect on the course readings and classroom dialogues. They assign in-class and take-home assignments (e.g., freewriting viewer responses, creative writing, reading questions, and short papers) to promote close readings and to stimulate critical thinking. This work facilitates the graded writing students complete in basic writing and freshman composition, respectively. The assignments appear below.

In class, you will write a three-to-four-page essay in which you identify several characteristics of Alfred Hitchcock's filmmaking style, and explain why, when you see the film clip from *North by Northwest*, that you know that the film you are seeing is a Hitchcock film. You may refer to other Hitchcock films in your discussion/analysis. (2WP)

Using MLA Style, write a four-to-six-page paper on the study of the theme of trespassing in *All the Pretty Horses*, *The Wild Bunch*, and *Brokeback Mountain*. (18WP)

As the in-class essay and the take-home paper illustrate, the students have been thoroughly prepared to write on the assigned topics. The prompts are designed to promote the application of cinematic-rhetorical analysis using genre codes and conventions, film rhetoric, and course readings to guide their critical responses. The writing assignments also press students to draw on their classroom knowledge and experience to develop their own arguments on film.

Through these assignments, Bratton-Hayes and Fischer continue to build student critical thinking skills. In basic writing, the selected prompt is writing for the final exam. In essence, this assignment implements shot-by-shot analysis, involving a close reading of a scene (Costanzo, pp. 120, 298). According to the film-writing advocate, William Costanzo, this kind of analysis promotes understanding and appreciation of film construction. For the students in basic writing, this assignment is a familiar territory. The students have analyzed a variety of Hitchcock films and have discussed genre movies that demonstrate similar cinematic-rhetorical techniques. In this particular

assignment, Bratton-Hayes concentrates on one aspect of this critical framework: Hitchcock and his methods of creating suspense. The assignment is a critical exercise in identifying a filmmaker's genre style and in developing academic argument. During this class session, the students are given three opportunities to take notes on a six-minute film clip from *North by Northwest*, a movie about espionage and mistaken identity. Bratton-Hayes has selected the scene in which Roger Thornhill, the protagonist/wrong man, is aided by Eve Kendall, a questionable Hitchcock Blonde, to escape from authorities at a Chicago train station. Before presenting the movie clip, Bratton-Hayes provides the film's information (e.g., the movie title, character portraits, names of actors, and a plot synopsis) so that the students have a context for viewing and reviewing the clip. Like the assignment in *Great films*, Bratton-Hayes reminds her students of the important cinematic-rhetorical discourse (e.g., *script*, *acting style*, *casting*, *sound*, *pacing*, etc.) that will be essential for analyzing the film's textual construction. The students have reference materials like their class notes, course readings, and other writing tasks to help them complete their essays (2007). After the multiple viewings, the students have 60 minutes to complete the exam.

In freshman composition, the selected prompt is a take-home paper. Similar to a writing assignment offered in *Reel conversations*, this prompt calls students to apply a cinematic-rhetorical approach to examine the treatment of a particular genre code or convention (e.g., the cowboy code) (Teasley & Wilder, p. 85). Media literacy scholars, Alan Teasley and Ann Wilder recommend this extension activity for exploring how this code or convention is represented in a western film or a number of westerns. Like Bratton-Hayes' students, Fischer's students are prepared for this critical writing.

Throughout the unit, his students have discussed the cinematic-rhetorical elements of individual and multiple western films. For this assignment, Fischer concentrates on a particular element of this critical methodology: the act of trespassing as a thematic genre convention. Fischer's writing prompt is a critical exercise in identifying and discussing a genre characteristic as well as its ideological value and meaning. Like the prompt in *Reel conversations*, this assignment is a challenging exercise. It requires students to compare and contrast how a genre convention is addressed in multiple texts. At the same time, the students must facilitate different sources to formulate their own arguments in similar ways that they would handle research materials. Through classroom dialogues, the students begin formulating a theory of trespassing after watching *All the Pretty Horses*. They continue to revisit this theory with each subsequent film. Like Bratton-Hayes' class, Fischer's students also have their class notes and course materials as references to complete the assignment. The students submit multiple drafts for teacher review and a final draft for portfolio assessment at the end of the term.

Ultimately, the writing prompts discussed in this section share a similar goal: the application of cinematic-rhetorical terms and concepts. Students identify, define, and apply academic discourse to 'do' textual analysis. Each prompt requires students to break down the arguments of film genre. Students are encouraged to deconstruct the film text, to make connections between and among film texts, and to discuss the way genre relies on certain themes and/or styles to further its argument. In the process, the students explore how cinematic-rhetorical techniques function to position viewer response and/or transmit ideological messages (Berlin, 1996; Costanzo, 2004; Masterman, 1985; Wallowitz, 2004). These assignments call on students to assert their role as active

viewers and to form critical responses to film through academic writing. The following section evaluates the students' application of a cinematic-rhetorical analysis of film.

### *Student Papers*

The purpose of cinematic-rhetorical analysis is to improve student critical thinking skills. One way the participants evaluate student knowledge and understanding of this critical framework is through academic writing. According to Timothy Corrigan, "Writing about films is one of the most sophisticated ways to respond to them" (qtd. in Fischer, 1999, p. 173). In basic writing and freshman composition, this response involves close readings of film genre and argument construction and/or the application of modes of discourse. Like a narrative-cultural analysis of film, this critical writing also requires synthesis, the recursive process of analyzing and evaluating course materials (e.g., reading selections, classroom notes, writing assignments, etc.) (Cruz, 1999, p. 109). In the classroom, the practitioners and their students have generated an array of arguments on a set of genre films. Students work from this collection of arguments to form their own critical responses to the suspense horror and western film genres (201-4, 6; 1801-4). As a part of the course, the participants also guide students through the writing process, preparing for in-class writing or reviewing outlines and drafts before the final submission of an essay. For Bratton-Hayes and Fischer, academic writing challenges students to apply different parts of this framework collectively. This component of cinematic-rhetorical analysis is significant as it enables students to extend their film literacy and appreciation of film genre through further critical viewing and textual analysis. In the end, both writing prompts generate student papers that

demonstrate critical response by way of cinematic-rhetorical analysis. The discussion presented here has been constructed from teacher interviews, classroom observations, and student writing.

The in-class essay or shot-by-shot analysis the students complete for Bratton-Hayes is based on a six-minute film clip from *North by Northwest*. In this clip, the students are introduced to Thornhill, an advertising executive who is accused of international espionage and framed for a murder he did not commit. Kendall, the typical Hitchcock Blonde, is both beautiful and suspicious. At this point in the film, however, she is to Thornhill a connection to the outside world, helping him escape from authorities and arrange a meeting with a government agent, George Kaplan, for whom he is mistaken. The students discuss and analyze the characters' arrival to Grand Central Station in Chicago, where Thornhill is disguised as a porter and Kendall's involvement with enemy agents is made known to the viewer. The scene includes a brief chase sequence in which authorities learn Thornhill has deboarded the train wearing a porter's uniform and a red cap. The selection of this film clip is illustrative of Hitchcock's style and methods of creating suspense. Through this critical writing assignment, I found Bratton-Hayes building on the previous reading and viewing experiences her students have completed during the term.

Although only a few students have seen *North by Northwest* (Bratton-Hayes confirmed this point during this class session), each student is capable of discussing and analyzing Hitchcock's genre style based on the film clip. In their writing, many students open their in-class essays with a discussion on Hitchcock as a filmmaker/writer who has a unique vision. For the students, this vision is composed of different cinematic-rhetorical

elements: story, character, casting, acting style, music, dialogue, and more. In the introduction to “You Can Always Know,” Bratton-Hayes’ student identifies the familiar elements of a Hitchcock film that are easily recognized in *North by Northwest*. His opening paragraph is included here.

When viewing a movie, the viewer may find their viewings familiar, as if they have seen this movie before. This is due to the filmmaker using his/her trademark, signature techniques. Alfred Hitchcock has many elements of style that he uses in many of his films. Three elements that are present in *North by Northwest* are Hitchcock’s unique script, casting, and cameo appearances. Even if the viewer has not seen the movie they are viewing, the viewer can always distinguish a Hitchcock film. (2SP~V1)

Aside from the problematic title, repetitious diction, and grammatical difficulties, Michael is apt in applying a cinematic-rhetorical approach as a framing device for introduction. In this opening, he notes elements (e.g., the author, purpose, content, and style) of the rhetorical context (Hobbs, 1998, p. 50a-b; Krueger, 1998, p. 19a; Schmertz & Trefzer, 1999, p. 96). The student recognizes Hitchcock as a director/author who has made choices to create and shape a particular style. Although the student does not state the genre this style belongs to and alludes to the film selections screened in class, words like *trademark* and *signature* indicate his understanding that Hitchcock has made careful decisions as a filmmaker/writer to cultivate this form. This understanding is also supported by his application of cinematic-rhetorical discourse (e.g., terms like *script*; *casting*; and, his own contribution, *cameo appearances*), the areas Michael will focus on throughout his essay to demonstrate the ways in which Hitchcock makes his films



distinctive. Students who wrote an opening like Michael's did well not only in establishing a foundation for discussing the film clip as a textual construction but also in providing the supporting points that would be covered in their papers.

As a part of their discussion, nearly half of the students in basic writing developed comprehensive critical responses to the film clip from *North by Northwest*. This analysis involves combining different rhetorical aspects of film that create a mood or the feeling of suspense for the viewer. The most common pairings for this discussion include the identification of aural-visual cues: an analysis of the musical score and its connection to film composition. In "How to Recognize When You Are Watching an Alfred Hitchcock Movie," one student writes:

Hitchcock films can be identified by the sound track. These sound tracks contribute to the suspense of his films. For example, in *North by Northwest* as Roger is running through the train station from the policemen, the music intensifies as the policemen grab men that are dressed like Roger, and spin them around then to find out that it isn't him. Likewise, in the famous shower scene in *Psycho* as Janet Leigh is taking a shower, based on the music one knows that something very bad is about to happen and we start to cover our eyes with our hands. The music[al] scores get our hearts pumping for the next scene. (2SP~J3)

Once again, the student's paragraph contains writing patterns common to basic writers. This notwithstanding, it is the kind of textual analysis Costanzo recommends for completing a shot-by-shot analysis (2004). Michelle's discussion presents a compact analysis of narrative tone, musical score, and film action. She articulates how these cinematic-rhetorical elements function to instill fear and anticipation in the viewer, a

response Hitchcock intended in *North by Northwest*. In the course of this analysis, Michelle also compares how this scene from *North by Northwest* elicits similar rhetorical effects as those in *Psycho*'s famous shower scene. In this way, she contextualizes the film clip within a larger scope (e.g., the codes and conventions) of Hitchcock's work. This discussion and variations like it indicate the development of film literacy, which, to Bratton-Hayes, is more than being familiar with directors and their work. Film literacy is seeing the relationship among the rhetorical aspects of film and how these work together to produce a singular effect on the viewer (paraphrase, 2I~9; Christel, 2001, p. 40; Considine & Haley, 1999, pp. 31, 287; Schmertz & Trefzer, 1999). This kind of analysis shows the students' development of academic literacy.

In their essays, Bratton-Hayes' students also form compact critical responses to the characters in *North by Northwest*. This textual analysis often brings together the discussion of plot, character, casting, acting style, and dialogue as cinematic-rhetorical devices that create genre style and meet audience expectations. Over the term, the students in basic writing have become familiar with Hitchcock's character types: handsome leading men who are wronged and sophisticated cool blondes who are duplicitous (Johnson & Johnson, 2006, 2007). Common to Hitchcock films, there is a romantic tension between the two characters. The students discuss these patterns that are apparent in the film clip. Below is one passage from an untitled student essay.

The main characters in *North by Northwest* immediately caught my attention upon the first viewing of the scene. Eve Kendall played by Eva Marie Saint (a blonde) was aloof, obviously intelligent, classy, and appeared to be up to something. Like Marnie and Madeline (from *Marnie* and *Vertigo*), Eve acted

strange. At the train station she was talking on the phone to one of the bad guys and later she lied to Roger Thornhill played by Cary Grant (a brunette) that the police were coming when they were not. She is not honest with Roger, which stuck out to me because Marnie and Madeline fit exactly the same description. Roger on the other hand was a good humored, easy going fellow who was clearly taken by his female escort. In the scene, he kept flirting with Eve about her heavy suitcases and wanted to keep in touch with her because she helped him. Once again, this description fits both Scottie and Mark (from *Vertigo* and *Marnie*). They trust women quickly and later get hurt for it. What I've noticed about Hitchcock's movies is that the female is always at the root of the problem in his films while the male (blinded by her beauty) is made a fool of. (2SP~P2-3)

In this passage, Andrea has composed a sophisticated argument on the characters in *North by Northwest*. She presents a brief character analysis of Kendall and Thornhill as seen in the film clip before drawing connections to Hitchcock codes and conventions on characterization. As Andrea explains in her opening sentence, each portrait meets her viewer expectations of typical Hitchcock characters. This sentence and the analysis that follows demonstrates her recognition that Kendall and Thornhill are character types who are integral to the narrative convention and style of Hitchcock's movies. Leading men like Thornhill, Scottie, and Mark are easily influenced by the Hitchcock Blonde. As a critical viewer, Andrea is aware that women like Kendall, Marnie, and Madeline function as genre catalysts. They are "the root of the problem in [Hitchcock's] films," providing romantic tension along with a suspicion of women. This commentary demonstrates Andrea's awareness that the Blonde is a cinematic-rhetorical device Hitchcock introduces

to create suspense. Through this discussion, Andrea and other students who argue this point also make the transition from individual to multiple text analyses, synthesizing genre codes and conventions from *Marnie* and *Vertigo* as a part of their discussion (Cruz, 1999).

Like the students in basic writing, the students in freshman composition also have the challenging task of forming academic arguments using cinematic-rhetorical analysis. Critical viewing methods and classroom dialogues have prepared students to discuss a common western genre convention: the act of trespassing. This approach presses students to analyze the film texts using a genre convention as a cinematic-rhetorical lens. Fischer's writing prompt is open ended, enabling a variety of connections between and among genre films and film arguments. It also fosters the application of modes of discourse (e.g., definition, comparison-contrast, and/or exemplification-illustration analyses). The assignment moreover helps students facilitate the texts in much the same way they are required to do so when handling research materials, a component of the freshman composition course. Although Fischer's students struggle to form critical responses using a number of texts, they are nonetheless making the transition toward academic writing.

One such paper that demonstrates this transition is written by a student who is not necessarily the strongest writer in Fischer's class. Guillermo is deliberate in his discussion on trespassing. While other students open their papers with a brief discussion (about one to two sentences) on the act of trespassing, Guillermo provides his readers an extended definition. His introduction explains the act of trespassing as a concept and

provides a lens for understanding the films he discusses in his paper. Below is the opening paragraph to “The Act of Trespassing.”

According to the dictionary, trespassing is defined as invading the property or rights of another without consent. To me trespassing means being some where you don’t supposed to be. It also means going over your limits and boundaries which includes breaking laws, rules, customs, norms, and stuff of that sort because they all impose limitations on our behavior in one way or another. It [trespassing] is a thing that occurs often and it can happen at anyplace and anytime with you being aware of it or not. Many forms of trespassing can be accidental and without great significance and therefore can be forgiven. Other forms of trespassing on the contrary can be intentional and have major effects that they are very much unforgivable. In the three movies that we saw, *All the Pretty Horses*, *The Wild Bunch*, and *Brokeback Mountain* different forms of trespassing occurred and ranging from invading territories to loving someone your not suppose to love. Many of the trespassers were not forgiven for their offenses.

(18SP~R1)

Aside from the obvious difficulties with the student’s text, there are wonderful moments in this opening paragraph. For one, Guillermo presents an overview of the ways in which trespassing may be conceived applying a mode of discourse (e.g., definition analysis) (Axelrod & Cooper, 2004). He first turns to the dictionary as a guide for this definition, a rhetorical move to establish his authority as a writer. To contextualize this definition, Guillermo next explores this concept in terms of the classroom dialogues on this genre convention. He posits that the act of trespassing can be understood as accidentally or

intentionally “breaking laws, rules, customs, and norms” that may or may not be forgivable. While the first half of the introduction demonstrates the breadth of this act, the second half of the paragraph constrains his argument. Guillermo informs his readers that he will not only explore the concept of trespassing in light of the three films screened in class but also show how many of these acts are not forgiven. In a general sense, the introduction demonstrates an ability to apply a cinematic-rhetorical approach to film as a framing device to synthesize a wide array of information discussed in class (Cruz, 1999).

From this opening paragraph, Guillermo moves into his supporting arguments, an ideological discussion on the representation of trespassing in *All the Pretty Horses*, *The Wild Bunch*, and *Brokeback Mountain*. For the most part, each point is a blossoming set of arguments on the different kinds of trespassing illustrated in the three westerns. He explores territorial (crossing borders), emotional (relationships and love), and physical (fighting and killing) forms of trespassing, providing extended examples for each point. The most interesting of these points is Guillermo’s discussion on emotional trespasses, which will be the focus of my discussion in the next pages. He writes:

Another form of trespassing that occurred in all the movies and the book regards relationships and love. In *All the Pretty Horses* John Grady Cole a very poor person with no money at all was in love with Alejandra who happened to be a high class girl with no financial needs since she is the daughter of a wealthy ranch owner. In this case John is at the bottom of the social class whereas Alejandra is at the top. This is in a way a form of trespassing because John is over looking [a] social class barrier which imposes limitations on who he can or

cannot be with. Usually the norm is for a high class person to be with another person of similar status or social class. (18SP~R2)

In this passage, Guillermo focuses on the ideological nature of trespassing – particularly, the social relations between and among characters. He addresses the differences in class status that prevent Cole and Alejandra from cultivating their relationship. On the one hand, Cole does not have the financial means to wed Alejandra – much less call himself a suitor. On a few occasions in the film (and novel), this point on differing social classes is articulated by the characters. As Guillermo notes, Cole is clearly traveling across class boundaries, challenging social structures. On the other hand, this relationship is not a suitable match for the Rocha family. Hector and Alfonsa de la Rocha, Alejandra's father and aunt, work to uphold class boundaries. These characters use their power and wealth to impose limitations on this relationship. This point is especially interesting because, later in the paragraph, Guillermo introduces the notion of marriage as an economic gain and a matter of protecting financial investments. He compares the Rocha's sentiments on marriage to matrimonial agreements between sovereigns. Through the discussion of a western genre convention, Guillermo examines and questions the ideological values the characters have regarding class, love, and marriage (Considine & Haley, 1999a, p. 32-33). This discussion exhibits the development of a critical academic literacy. This argument positioning is evident throughout his analysis on the emotional forms of trespassing.

As a part of his argument on relationships and love, Guillermo also takes a similar ideological approach to the act of trespassing in his cinematic-rhetorical analysis of *The Wild Bunch* and *Brokeback Mountain*. For these texts, he concentrates on the violent

forms of trespassing the characters exhibit in these westerns. In his discussion of *The Wild Bunch*, Guillermo examines the power relations between men and women – particularly the treatment of women as property and objects. This ideological analysis is in accordance with the current theoretical perspectives on the western film (Bordwell & Thompson, 2001; Costanzo, 2004; Corrigan & White, 2004; Lehman & Luhr, 2003; Teasley & Wilder). In his argument, Guillermo presents one scene in which Angel, a member of the wild bunch, shoots his former lover, Theresa, for abandoning him (and their Mexican village) for the leisure and provisions of Mapache and the Federales soldiers. In this scene, neither Angel nor the Federales recognize Theresa's need for a simpler and easier way of life. She does not wish to struggle for food and comfort. Guillermo writes: "I found [the] relationships to be a form of trespassing because [the] men treated women as objects rather than human beings. I felt [the] men went over their limits with women because I saw no forms of respect for them" (18SP~R3). To Guillermo, every male character in this film oversteps his boundaries in his relationships. These characters, including Pike and his crew, believe they can use women, discard them, and shoot them when the matter suits their purposes. Guillermo raises this point to further his discussion on relationships and love – the treatment of women being an extension of this argument on trespassing. He concludes that, in this western, men are prone to violence when women assert themselves. Through this point, Guillermo makes a critical assessment on the power relations between men and women in *The Wild Bunch* (Corrigan & White, pp. 303-304; Costanzo, p. 85).

Guillermo's point on violent forms of trespassing is also central to the cinematic-rhetorical analysis of *Brokeback Mountain*. In analyzing this film, Guillermo explores



the treatment of homosexuality and same-sex relationships as liable to punishment. Once again, this analysis is significant, considering the current focus on the representation of gender and sexual orientation in Hollywood films (Costanzo, p. 95). Guillermo explains: “Typically when you think of a couple, you think of a male and a female. In today’s world a two female couple is starting to become more acceptable but a two male couple is still difficult [for people] to digest” (18SP~R3). Guillermo explains how violent measures are taken against men who trespass against “normal” forms of sexual orientation. To illustrate this point, he examines Ennis’ recollection at seeing the body of a castrated man who was accused of being homosexual. Guillermo notes that, in the film, this experience is a warning to all who trespass against social norms. He believes it is the reason Ennis is especially guarded of his relationship with Jack, meeting him at an isolated location a few times a year. Ennis fears being sought out aggressively for his sexual preference. As Guillermo suggests through his discussion on class, gender, and sexual orientation, the western explores different forms of trespassing as acts of ignorance and violations of human rights. His discussion indirectly acknowledges how these westerns are not entertainment. For Guillermo, the western film has a contemporary relevance and psychological appeal for viewers, exploring social-cultural concerns through a set of genre codes and conventions (Lehman & Luhr, p. 100; Teasley & Wilder, pp. 74-76).

To extend his argument on trespassing as a genre convention, Guillermo also includes an additional section examining the forms of trespassing that are acceptable and unacceptable to the characters in these westerns. As a part of this discussion, Guillermo takes a cinematic-rhetorical approach that demonstrates James Berlin’s concept of binary

oppositions, an investigation of the text's preferred reading and ideological leaning through an analysis of visual and verbal contradictions or conflicts (1996, pp. 124-130). For this discussion, Guillermo has cued into a binary opposition in *The Wild Bunch*. In his examination, Guillermo, once again, explores the contradictions and conflicts apparent in the film's treatment of women. While Guillermo is aware of the film's relevance as an argument against violence and the Vietnam War, he questions whether the movie successfully makes this point. In one passage, he writes: "In *The Wild Bunch*, men treated women like objects and didn't seem to be punished for it. The women didn't seem to mind either, on the contrary they were having a good time" (18SP~R5). Guillermo's observation is insightful. He suggests that the decision to forgive is based on societal norms: the relations between those who have power and those who do not. While the cowboys in the movie obviously trespass against women by treating them as expendable objects and possessions, the condition of the west as shown in *The Wild Bunch* does not deem this behavior as farfetched or out of the ordinary. Guillermo notes how all of the men respond when Angel murders his lover Theresa in a jealous rage: "The general along with his army found this [act] to be hilarious and started laughing and acted like nothing had happened" (18SP~R3). Guillermo's critical viewing sensibilities finds this and other behavior toward women questionable. Even more puzzling to him is the way the female characters are portrayed as being complicit in this treatment. Instead of resisting these trespasses, the women have developed relationships with the men in power (e.g., women as having a good time). Clearly, Guillermo is responding to the ideological messages being transmitted regarding male-female relations. Through this commentary, Guillermo suggests that the ideological leaning on the treatment of women in *The Wild*

*Bunch* is problematic yet presented as acceptable. This particular observation is interesting for its application of cinematic-rhetorical analysis and its move toward a critical academic literacy.

In analyzing the student papers, I found the participants' application of cinematic-rhetorical analysis introduces broader ways of thinking about film, genre, and composition. This teaching practice offers students a way in which to read, understand, interpret, and analyze the film text. It also helps them frame their academic arguments. The student writing discussed here clearly demonstrates an engagement in analyzing the effects of film rhetoric and/or exploring the social-political nature of film genre. The students in basic writing and freshman composition have worked diligently to sort through multiple interpretations on film genre to create and shape their own written arguments. They assert themselves as readers and writers of film. Through this film-writing pedagogy, Bratton-Hayes and Fischer facilitate the work of first-year composition.

### Conclusions

Like cultural studies writing scholars, the participants support a multimedia approach to the composition classroom. This instruction enables practitioners to apply current theoretical perspectives on teaching and learning, thereby widening the scope of student personal schemata (Berlin & Vivion, 1992; Kasper, 1999, p. 413a-b; Vetrie, 2004, p. 44a). It introduces students to a variety of texts to examine the mechanisms through which these texts communicate. This approach to college composition is significant. The application of cinematic-rhetorical analysis helps the participants teach

their students about the construction and function of texts. In this way, this pedagogy bridges the gap between aural-visual and verbal forms of communication. It offers new methods of accessing the written text (Allender, 2004; Holbrook, 1987; Hunt & Hunt, 2004; Penrod, 1997a-b).

A cinematic-rhetorical analysis of film is a teaching practice that supports student knowledge and experience. This approach engages students in course readings, classroom dialogues, and academic writing. In the observed classrooms, this teaching practice created authentic teacher-student and student-student connections. The practitioners were genuinely interested in student ideas and experiences with film, genre, and culture while their students were invested in classroom discussions and often generated many lively conversations. Based on classroom observations, I found that the discussion of film genre as cultural ritual fostered student motivation, allowing teachers to pave the way toward rigorous critical thinking (Berlin, 1996; hooks, 1996; Giroux, 2002; Schmertz, 2001).

The study of this film-writing pedagogy also reveals important developments in student academic literacy. Although many of the students participating in this research are beginning writers, their classroom dialogues and writing assignments demonstrate that they are improving their critical thinking skills through a cinematic-rhetorical analysis of film. In these writing classrooms, the students received a general overview of film study and film genre and the application of academic discourse. This critical framework helped them frame critical responses to film. The students learned to develop arguments on genre codes and conventions, film rhetoric, and ideology. This instruction raised student awareness of genre composition, audience expectations, textual

positioning, and the transmission of ideological values (Bishop, 1999, pp. 64-65; Considine & Haley, 1999a, pp. 22-28; Hobbs, 1998; Krueger, 1998; Teasley & Wilder, 1997; Thoman et al., 2003; Wicks, 1983). In addition to this intellectual development, the students also practiced general principles of composition: critical reading and writing as well as individual and multiple text analyses. In brief, film as cultural ritual became an unfamiliar text (Harris, 1999; Maloney & Miller, 1999) – specifically, a rhetorical text similar to the written word (Berlin, 1991).

All in all, the application of cinematic-rhetorical analysis helps students develop the intellectual skills that are essential to becoming critical viewers, readers, and writers. Through this film-writing pedagogy, Bratton-Hayes, Fischer, and the other participants foster the transition toward college writing helping their students to acquire academic literacy.

CHAPTER SIX

THE IMPLICATIONS IN FOCUS:

THE IMPACT OF FILM STUDY IN FIRST-YEAR COMPOSITION

Introduction

In this dissertation, the application of film in composition presents two forms of critical inquiry: narrative-cultural and cinematic-rhetorical analyses. As the cases in chapters four and five demonstrate, the application of these analytical frameworks informs the classroom practices, course objectives, teaching strategies, and writing assignments participants set to meet the goals of the writing classroom. The following chapter examines the effects of including film study in first-year composition, focusing on three implications resulting from the study. The first implication considers the influence the application of film and film study has on teaching and learning philosophies. It explores how the application of this aural-visual medium restores the connections between home and school cultures, thereby transforming classroom practices and creating an authentic learning experience. The second implication addresses the importance of film study for the field of composition. It examines the ways in which film works effectively with various teaching approaches in the cultural-studies-based writing classroom to develop critical thinking skills. The third and final implication of this chapter presents how the application of film and film study in writing instruction is integral to the development of twenty-first century literacy skills. It considers the effects of implementing broader conceptions of literacy in first-year composition. In brief, the purpose of this chapter is to evaluate the benefits and consequences of including film-

writing pedagogies in college composition. The cases illustrate how the application of film and film study is a sound teaching practice for developing the critical thinking skills important to academic literacy and for preparing students as forthcoming members of the social-political world.

### A Word on Methodology and the Participants

This chapter on the effects of film-writing pedagogies in composition focuses on Research Question #3: *What are the implications of incorporating an aural-visual medium like film to the writing classroom?* It consists of information collected from fifteen writing practitioners teaching at nineteen community colleges in and near Los Angeles County. (See Appendices J and K.) It also includes information collected from sixty-four students who agreed to participate. The findings are based on the process of collecting and examining teacher interviews, classroom observations, and course artifacts (e.g., course readings, writing assignments, student writing). During and after the study, data were generated, coded, and analyzed to find patterns, themes, and variations among the participants. The data consist of teacher interviews; classroom observations; student surveys; course syllabi; scholarship and research on film-writing pedagogy, cultural studies writing pedagogy, media literacy education, basic writing theory, and literacy studies; and my impressions. The chapter explores the benefits and consequences of including film and film study in first-year composition.

For this study, I followed the criteria for participant selection discussed in chapter three to solicit first-year writing professors and instructors from various community colleges in southern California. Among the participants discussed in this chapter, Clara

Bautista, Dr. Madeline Bowman, Dr. Anne Bratton-Hayes, and Dr. Eric Fischer responded to a Letter of Introduction forwarded via e-mail by the department chair and recommended colleagues. Initial meetings were scheduled with these potential case participants. Based on these meetings, I planned informal visits to their classrooms, scheduled teacher interviews, and worked toward IRB Research Site Approval. Official classroom observations took place in Spring and Fall 2006.

In addition to the teacher participants, I also solicited student participants. This group consists of the students of the four writing teachers who volunteered to contribute to the study through teacher interviews and classroom observations. These participants are a diverse population, consisting of traditional and nontraditional students enrolled in various levels of writing instruction (from basic writing to advanced composition). At the beginning of each case observation, the students were invited to become participants in the study. The students were observed in the classroom, and their writing was collected and studied to note the development of critical thinking skills and academic writing. As a part of the study, the students completed a brief survey focusing on the effectiveness of film study in first-year composition. Forty-seven surveys were collected and analyzed. (Refer to Appendix F - Student Survey Responses.)

On a final note, it is worth noting that not all the information gathered, coded, and analyzed for this dissertation project is included in this chapter's discussion. During the study, I considered Daron Henley, Dr. Grace Leigh, and their students as possible cases. Each participated in initial meetings, teacher interviews, classroom observations, and student surveys. When I began data analysis, however, I realized that the first participant Henley, a composition teacher at a four-year private college, was quite different from the



other writing practitioners teaching at various community colleges. I chose not to include interviews with or observations of his classroom in the study given the differences in his teaching philosophy and the student population at this institution. The second practitioner, Leigh, also participated in teacher interviews and classroom observations. Although she primarily teaches at the community-college level, the classroom observation with this practitioner took place at another place of employment, a four-year university. For this reason, her teacher interviews and a selection of course handouts from various community colleges courses are only included as a part of this chapter's discussion.

### The Implications in Focus

The discussion on narrative-cultural and cinematic-rhetorical analyses gives writing professors and instructors a better understanding of what it means to practice film in composition. Chapters four and five offer writing teachers the rationale, course objectives, teaching strategies, and writing assignments the participants apply in their classrooms. On one level, these film-writing pedagogies reveal what films work well with students (e.g., feature and genre films) to facilitate multiple close readings and to foster different kinds of written communication (e.g., short papers, reading journals, free writing, outlines, drafts, and final drafts). They also present the different texts (e.g., cultural and critical articles, short essays, movie reviews, and/or works of literature) this medium may be paired with to access the written word. On another level, the cases demonstrate the way film-writing pedagogies give coherence to writing instruction. As forms of critical inquiry, narrative-cultural and cinematic-rhetorical analyses connect film

and film study to composition. In these cases, the film text assumes writing course objectives (e.g., the exploration of narrative themes, the discussion of social-cultural issues, the examination of film and culture, the investigation of representation and ideology, and the study of film as composition and argument). The analytical frameworks introduce particular methods of critical viewing and critical response. These frameworks may be integrated as a part of a course theme or the focus of a course unit. In this study, the film-writing pedagogies illustrate the different ways the study of film may be incorporated into composition. The cases begin to describe what the teaching practice entails.

For the field of composition, the film-writing pedagogies discussed in chapters four and five suggest the significance of film in composition. Like the scholarship and research on this topic, the participants' integration of film in the writing classroom is modern, unique, and appealing. Even so, its integration requires further consideration. For this reason, the following chapter explores the implications of incorporating an aural-visual medium like film into college composition. These implications address the following questions: Does the inclusion of film in composition indicate that writing teachers are catering to students and to shorter attention spans? Does the integration of this medium push writing instruction to the margins? How does film in writing instruction improve the literacy skills students need to become contributing members of society? The application of film in the writing classroom has far-reaching implications for teaching and learning philosophies, for the field of composition, and for the concept of literacy in the twenty-first century. To understand how and why film is significant to the development of critical thinking, critical response, and academic writing, I consider

different pedagogical arguments on film in composition. In an effort to help readers make informed choices regarding this teaching practice, I examine the implications of these film-writing pedagogies in this chapter.

*Implication #1: Film in Composition*

*Transforms Teaching and Learning Practices*

In composition studies, the pedagogical appeal of film in college writing derives from its dual status as art and artifact. The medium is unique in serving the educational desires of both teachers and students (Allender, 2004; Holbrook, 1987; Hunt & Hunt, 2004; Penrod, 1997a-b). As a tool and as an object of study, film creates pleasurable classroom experiences. For the teacher participants, the text is integral to teaching and learning philosophies. Writing teachers rely on the familiarity of film to hone critical thinking skills and introduce students to academic writing and discourses. According to cultural studies writing pedagogies, its use is a form of good pedagogy (paraphrase, Aronowitz qtd. in Giroux et al., 1989).

Even though the decision to include film in composition is informed by cultural studies-media literacy writing theories, the participants are aware that its application raises an important pedagogical question: Does the inclusion of film in composition mean that writing teachers are catering to students and to shorter attention spans? As advocates for film in college writing, a selection of participants do realize that their perspectives on teaching and learning are subject to conflicting responses from colleagues and members of the academic community (13I~9; 2I~20-21; 16I~5; 18I). On the one hand, the application of film study is considered free and easy pedagogy. It is regarded as lacking

in academic rigor (as discussed in Masterman, 1985, p. 34). On the other hand, the use of film in composition is perceived as yielding to a pervasive medium. Under this conception, film, like other popular media, holds the promise of instant gratification for its pleasure-seeking audience (Giroux, 1994; Hobbs, 2004, 2006). Its technologies and discourses have cultivated youth who are ready for the next technology, the next message (Penrod, 1997a, pp. 17-18). When considered from these perspectives, film in composition is preconceived as an extension of entertainment. It is a way to occupy classroom time and “an attentional hook” to get students interested in the writing classroom (Hobbs, 2006, p. 40).

The fact that these opposing arguments are raised should come as no surprise. The concept of pleasure – in particular, the role of film – in writing instruction is a matter of conflicting writing pedagogies at a selection of community colleges (Cohen & Brawer, 2003, pp. 165-196). For the participants, however, the use of film in composition is not an easy way to pass first-year composition students or a clever way to compel the film-generation to pay attention in class. Rather, the application of narrative-cultural and cinematic-rhetorical analyses is grounded in restoring the connections between social and academic practices. This pedagogical desire has far-reaching implications for teaching and learning philosophies, especially for the writing teachers at the two-year college who instruct traditional and nontraditional students with different backgrounds, ethnicities, and aspirations (paraphrase, Shannon & Smith, 2007, p. 15).

As cultural studies writing practitioners, the participants believe their positions as composition teachers requires them to assess the academic backgrounds, cultural histories, and social interests of their students. Although unprepared for college writing,

many of these students plan to transfer to four-year colleges and universities. These students enter the classroom, not as *tabula rasas* or empty vessels (Miller & Fox, 2005). Some have completed traditional methods of writing instruction through high school classes while others enter the composition classroom with uneven writing experiences. Regardless of the educational preparation of their students, the participants in this study rely on the commonplace that their students are avid ‘readers’ of film. It is the one text students have in their repertoire (9I~11). Like cultural studies and media literacy scholars, the participants recognize film’s potential for creating positive classroom experiences and fostering authentic learning (Alvermann, Moon, & Hagood, 1999; Aronowitz qtd. in Giroux et al., 1989; Considine & Haley, 1999a; Costanzo, 2004; George & Trimbur, 2001; Hobbs, 2006; Masterman, 1985; Vetrie, 2004). The application of film and its critical frameworks illustrate how the participants’ efforts are not intended to lower academic standards but to make writing instruction meaningful to and for their students.

By the same token, students also recognize and appreciate the efforts teachers put forth to make writing instruction engaging. Table 7: *On Student Enrollment, Motivation, and Participation* (on the next page) compiles student responses from student surveys and classroom observations. In this dissertation, over a third of the students (about 36%) decided to enroll in a particular section of first-year composition based on the instructor appointed to the course and his or her teaching methods (i.e., the use of film in composition). For this decision, students turned to their peers and/or ratemyprofessor.com to inform their enrollment processes. In some cases, students (about 15%) considered how the use of film appealed to their learning styles as visual

learners. This perspective on teaching philosophies also is significant to student motivation. In their surveys, students discussed how the inclusion of film in composition motivated them to understand the themes of the course, to access the written text, to recognize film as a model for literature and composition, and to write academic essays. These responses are especially telling, revealing that students take film seriously and that they understand its use is primarily to facilitate writing and reading processes. On a larger scale, they also suggest how teaching philosophies influence student motivation and learning.

Table 7

*On Student Enrollment, Motivation, and Participation*

| Reason for Enrollment                                                                                | Student Motivation                                         | Student Participation                                                                                                                                 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Consider teachers and his / her teaching methods<br><br>Appeal to learning styles as visual learners |                                                            | Being prepared for in-class activities                                                                                                                |
|                                                                                                      | To understand themes in the course                         | Keeping critical viewing notes                                                                                                                        |
|                                                                                                      | To access the written text                                 | Sharing their interpretations                                                                                                                         |
|                                                                                                      | To recognize film as a model for literature or composition | Leading small- / large-group discussions (e.g., posing thoughtful questions, asserting own positions, challenging viewpoints, and refuting arguments) |
|                                                                                                      | To write academic essays                                   |                                                                                                                                                       |

In addition to these student responses, the participants' teaching philosophies on film and writing also indicate notable changes in the classroom environment (10I; 20I; 17I; 2CR; 18CR; Bishop, 1999). Based on the observations of Clara Bautista, Dr. Madeline Bowman, Dr. Anne Bratton-Hayes, and Dr. Eric Fischer, the application of film in writing instruction cultivated a unique and immediate experience in the classroom. This experience is not surprising, considering that film, as a text, is a community-driven

activity. As a shared literacy and a common language, film is part of a democratizing pedagogy (Masterman, 1985). It levels the playing field so that all students have the potential to contribute to the academic conversation (8I~5; 9I~9; 11I~4; Schmertz & Trefzer, 1999, p. 87).

For example, during the classroom observations, the film selections generated and fostered student interest and participation. Table 7 lists the different ways students worked in the classroom. In these courses, the students demonstrated active involvement by being prepared for in-class activities, keeping critical viewing notes, sharing their impressions, and defending their interpretations and arguments. At some class meetings, students lead small- and/or large-group discussions and dialogues, posing thoughtful reading questions, asserting their own subject positions, challenging ideological viewpoints, and refuting different arguments (20O4~2, 20O6~4-8; 9O2~3-9; 2O1~5-6, 2O6; 18O1-5). At the time of the observations, it was clear to the case participants and me that the students found the film text a pleasurable and unifying classroom experience. Though agreeable reading material, the students completed rigorous curricular objectives (Alvermann, Moon, & Hagood, p. 38). Students rose to the challenge, becoming active and critical viewers/participants of the classroom.

Given the dynamics of these classrooms, it is evident that the application of film in composition bridged the gap between social and academic cultures, transforming classroom practices. In using this text, the case participants not only subscribe to constructivist theories on student learning (Alvermann, Moon, & Hagood, p. 29; Semali, 2002, p. x), but also help their students make the transition from high school English to college English. In essence, the inclusion of film in composition motivates critical

response (e.g., reading, writing, and discussion) to films and to other related texts in the classroom. Film prepares students to widen the scope of personal schemata (Kasper, 1999; Vetrie, 2004). It serves as a starting point for the development of academic literacy, a set of institutional discourses that signals a student's entrance into the academic community (Bartholmae, 1985/1997).

### *Implication #2: Film in Composition*

#### *Reinforces the Goals of Writing Instruction*

While the application of film has positive consequences for teaching philosophies, classroom practices, and student learning, it also makes a significant contribution to the field of composition – in particular, to cultural studies writing theories. In first-year composition, two forms of critical inquiry, narrative-cultural and cinematic-rhetorical analyses, give coherence to writing instruction. The primary goal of these analytical frameworks is to develop student critical thinking skills important to academic writing. As frameworks, these film-writing pedagogies offer a set of critical viewing methods and teaching strategies to help students improve critical responses to the film text and the written word. In the process, these frameworks reinforce the goals of writing instruction.

Although composition studies theoretically supports the pedagogical innovation of film study via a cultural studies writing paradigm, its application poses a significant question for this discipline: Does the integration of film in composition push the act of writing to the margins? In college writing, teachers are faced with institutional and classroom challenges: short semesters, high enrollments, and process-writing instruction. To include film study in first-year composition packs the classroom with an additional



demand: teaching students to read and write about moving images. However appealing this text may be, it requires a specialized knowledge. The application of analytical frameworks may be considered instruction in close literary readings and genre films, respectively (George & Trimbur, 2001, p. 82; Bordwell & Thompson, 2001; Corrigan & White, 2004). In this light, each may be perceived as a repackaging of literary studies and film studies, which takes time away from writing instruction.

For the participants in this study, the film text is not a means of doing literary studies *or* film studies. Chapters four and five demonstrate that the application of narrative-cultural and cinematic-rhetorical analyses serve the teaching and student outcomes of college composition. They are intended to provide ways of reading, understanding, and analyzing film. Both applications draw on student knowledge and experience to foster critical inquiry, classroom dialogue, and academic writing. These cases accomplish a set of course goals. The participants apply film study to establish how films are similar to and different from other texts (e.g., literature and composition); to illustrate that films, like other texts, communicate arguments; to support close readings of the written text; and to explore the social-cultural themes and ideological values inherent to film and other texts. In this study, the film selections generate classroom discussions on film, culture, and identity. The analytical frameworks present methods for promoting critical viewing, reading, and writing while honing critical responses to the text. Through film and film study, the participants demonstrate how this medium and its frameworks can be used easily, directly, and almost unconditionally to develop the critical thinking skills that are important to academic writing.

Working toward these teaching outcomes, however, requires practitioners to integrate film into composition in constructive ways. Table 8: *Integrating Film into Composition* (below) presents the multiple formats the participants use in composition. In the study, the participants are the first to acknowledge that the inclusion of film in the writing classroom demands preparation (18I~12; 13I~8; 3I~10; 12I~8). This preparation begins with considering the constraints of time and the goals of composition. To meet course objectives, the participants incorporate different kinds of film reading into their syllabi. These writing teachers schedule short films or film clips to introduce or demonstrate the study of film content or film genre.

Table 8

*Integrating Film into Composition*

| <b>Kinds of Film Readings</b>      | <b>Percentage of Participants</b> |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Screening Short Film or Film Clips | 47%                               |
| Assigning At-Home Reading          | 20%                               |
| Showing Entire Films               | 93%                               |

Nearly half of the participants (about 47%) have opted to include short films or film clips at least once during the term to accommodate multiple readings and classroom dialogues. Another way the participants also maximize class time and meet course objectives is by including film as at-home reading. Albeit a smaller group of teachers (about 20%) assign film as homework placing films on library reserve or selecting films readily available through online rental services, this option also helps the participants accommodate in-class activities and discussions. More commonly, the practitioners (about 93%) screen an entire film at least once a semester. Like the use of other movie formats, the screening of entire films requires the participants to construct a unit that accommodates course

readings, promotes classroom discussions, and generates different forms of writing (e.g., reading questions, short papers, creative writing, freewriting, expository writing, etc.). The unit's design is divided into meaningful segments with time allotted for pre-reading/pre-viewing, reading/viewing, and post-reading/post-viewing activities. From start to finish, the participants are cognizant of the teaching outcomes they must accomplish in order to foster student critical response and academic writing.

As a part of this preparation, the participants also integrate film study into composition in other constructive ways. They couple film with a number of writing approaches to meet teaching outcomes. While these approaches are subsumed within a cultural studies writing pedagogy, they are, nevertheless, related to the development of critical thinking. In their classrooms, the case participants

- Incorporate the application of interpretative frameworks and academic discourses to foster critical reading and viewing (Bartholomae, 1979, 1985/1997; Schmertz, 2001; Schmertz & Trefzer, 1999);
- Establish learning communities to promote alternate points of view and comprehensive thinking regarding the assigned readings and the course themes (Bruffee, 1984/1997; Trimbur, 1989/1997);
- Foster expressive, close, and ideological readings to mine the text for meaning (Berlin, 1996; Harris, 1999; Teasley & Wilder, 1997);
- Teach comparative and/or contrastive modes of textual analyses to develop student understanding of textual construction and argument (Berlin, 1996; Berlin & Vivion, 1992; Considine & Haley, 1999a-c; Fitts & France, 1995; Hobbs, 1998; Thoman et al., 2003);

- Encourage the application of rhetorical discourse for making connections between and among texts (Axelrod & Cooper, 2004; Moser & Watters, 2004; Ramage et al., 2006; Wyrick, 2004); and
- Assign various writing assignments to practice different kinds of writing and for testing arguments (Cruz, 1999; Elbow, 1998; Murray, 1997).

When coupled with each teaching method, the study of film clearly does not push the act of writing to the margins. The participants – more specifically, the cases – emphasize the importance of engaging the text from different perspectives and on multiple occasions. The progression of classroom dialogues and writing assignments presented in chapters four and five work similarly to prewriting exercises. They inform the recursive process of composing and the act of forming arguments.

In addition to teaching outcomes, the study of film in composition also facilitates student outcomes. The analyses of student surveys and student coursework reveal that the decisions and approaches the participants implemented in first-year composition were effective teaching methods. In the survey, the student participants expressed an awareness of the outcomes of film study in writing instruction. This population recognized that the study of film was intended to demonstrate how texts function and communicate, to illustrate social-cultural and ideological issues, to improve analytical thinking, to motivate close readings and multiple interpretations of texts, and to generate topics for expository and research writing. Once again, these responses are demonstrating that students take film seriously. They reaffirm the teaching and learning philosophies covered in the first implication. They also indicate that students understand

the role of film in writing instruction. The text is intended to extend their knowledge of texts and to meet writing course requirements.

The analyses of classroom dialogues and student papers from the cases also demonstrate film's potential in fostering student outcomes. In the study, the participating students apply narrative-cultural or cinematic-rhetorical analysis as an analytical framework for guiding their critical responses in the classroom and in their papers. In chapter four, Bautista's and Bowman's students apply narrative-cultural analysis

- To analyze themes and develop their positions on a social-cultural issue,
- To generate empathetic readings of characters and conflicts,
- To contextualize social-cultural themes from the assigned readings within current media reports,
- To learn how to manage the written text (e.g., making connections between and among texts, implementing reading strategies), and
- To compose their own written arguments.

In chapter five, Bratton-Hayes' and Fischer's students apply cinematic-rhetorical analysis

- To examine how texts communicate ideological values and arguments;
- To analyze the rhetorical purpose of film choices and how these choices affect viewer response;
- To make connections between film and the general principles of composition;
- To discuss film as a commodity, an art form, and a cultural ritual;
- To explore film codes and conventions and how these relate to audience expectations;

- To decode film's devices and strategies; and
- To develop their own critical arguments on film and other texts.

In these cases, the students ground their writing in close readings of the film selections and related written texts. They apply a critical framework and its respective academic discourse as a lens to create academic arguments and to cultivate a public voice, both of which are significant to writing instruction. Through the inclusion of film study in composition, the student participants demonstrate an ability to respond critically and to fulfill the course objectives essential to first-year composition.

All in all, the outcomes discussed here indicate two significant contributions to the field of composition. One, the application of film study supports the beliefs about the teaching of writing. In the classroom, the participants show that narrative-cultural and cinematic-rhetorical analyses emphasize that writing and reading are related, that writing has a complex relationship to talk, that composition occurs in different modalities and technologies, that writing is a tool for thinking, and that writing is a process (paraphrase, "NCTE beliefs," 2004). Two, the teaching and student outcomes also demonstrate that the application of film study works effectively with various writing approaches in the college writing classroom. In this study, the cases not only apply cultural studies-media literacy writing theory but also refer to basic-writing, collaborative-learning, modes-of-discourse, and process-writing theories.

Based on the data collected and analyzed (e.g., course syllabi, classroom dialogues, student papers, student surveys) for the study, it is clear that narrative-cultural and cinematic-rhetorical analyses reinforced the goals of writing instruction. In these classrooms, the analytical frameworks were integrated in creative and yet appropriate

ways. The cases support a media literacy argument that the study of popular culture in education does not necessarily indicate a compromised teaching practice (Hobbs, 1994; Thoman et al., 2003). Creative pedagogies take the general principles of a discipline and present them using innovative methods (Hobbs, 2006; Miners & Pascopella, 2007). For the cases, the application of film-writing pedagogies helped develop the student critical thinking skills that are important to academic writing.

### *Implication #3: Film in Composition*

#### *Expands the Concept of Literacy*

Thus far, it is evident that the application of film in composition helps students make the transition from high school to college English. As a tool and as a text, this application transforms classroom practices while facilitating various writing course goals. Undoubtedly, the first two implications support the scholarship and research on reframing writing pedagogies from a film-in-composition perspective (Schmertz, 2001). On a larger scope, this writing instruction is instrumental to the development of literacy in the twenty-first century. Supporting the push toward innovation, film in composition is a balanced pedagogy, one that includes written and aural-visual texts. For the participants in this study, film is a unique medium. Its inclusion in composition extends the meaning of the words *literacy*, *text*, and *argument*. It prepares students to respond critically to different texts in and outside the writing classroom. For this reason, film in composition is an important pedagogy, honing multiple kinds of literacy while cultivating student voice and raising political awareness.

The decision to take a cultural studies approach and integrate film into composition does give rise to a persistent question on literacy: How does the use of film in writing instruction improve the literacy skills students need to become contributing members of society? Given the role of composition at the two-year college and the four-year university, this question is significant. It inquires on the preparation college students receive to meet the demands of the modern world. Without a doubt, the response to this question depends on how the word *literacy* is defined. Over the centuries, this word has traditionally been defined in terms of written communication – or more specifically, as the ability to read and write print. Today, this particular definition of *literacy* is still prevalent in academia and, by extension, society. The idea of expanding the concept of *literacy* is often met with conflicting responses. Introducing broadened understandings of *literacy* changes the cultural status of the written word and challenges western philosophies that have shaped education (18I; 16I~8; 13I~9; 11I~7; 2I~20-21; Arnheim, 1980, p. 171). For many, the proliferation of advancing technologies and emerging literacies – especially those of ‘the screen’ – is often considered a deterrent to print literacy and the intellectual skills needed to participate in the social-political world (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991, p. 153; Hobbs, 2001; Siegel, 1999).

However well intentioned this argument may be, it does not recognize the rising standards of literacy in the twenty-first century. For the participants in this study, literacy is the ability to respond critically to a variety of texts: print media and nonprint media (5I~9; 8I~8; 12I~9; 13I~3; 19~9; “NCTE beliefs,” 2004; “Standards,” 2007). In accordance with cultural studies-media literacy writing pedagogies, the participants’ approach to literacy is balanced (Miners & Pascopella, 2007). A review of their syllabi



illustrates an array of course readings (e.g., cultural and critical articles, feature and genre films, movie reviews, and works of literature) coupled in creative ways to extend student critical thinking skills. In these first-year composition courses, literacy becomes the ability

- To access different texts (e.g., the written text through the film text, and visa versa),
- To analyze how these texts communicate (e.g., through words on the page or images and sound), and
- To evaluate their effectiveness (e.g., the way messages or themes are presented).

This kind of instruction works toward critical response. As demonstrated in chapters four and five, the participants encourage their students to make connections between and among texts. The course readings are thoughtful selections that not only promote the analysis of individual texts, but also facilitate the analysis of multiple texts. This approach to literacy is valuable. While the study of individual texts introduce different interpretations on cultural issues, the study of multiple texts creates a kind of textual dialogue between and among texts. The course readings inform and shape the meaning of other readings. They naturally lend themselves to comparisons, contrasts, causes, effects, divisions, and classifications. This approach to literacy extends student knowledge of and experience with texts. Through the selection of course readings, the participants develop the reading practices that are traditionally valued in academia. In short, they work toward academic literacy.

As a form of popular culture, film is a valuable addition to the college writing classroom. While other forms of popular media offer students similar access to academic literacy, the textuality of film sets it apart from other media. For the participants, film in composition is always advantageous. It is a relatively compact and highly constructed medium. Film does not pose the challenges of serialization. It does not require a contextual knowledge of characters and conflicts like television programs (2I~18; 3I~8). Film is not a private medium. It is not highly personal for students like music (18I~12). To the participants, film introduces students to alternate points of view. It opens the classroom to different perspectives raised by the film text and to multiple voices in the classroom (10I~7; 9I~11). As a text, film is replete with ideological values and beliefs. It is a challenging and yet familiar text, one that students enjoy but rarely politicize (2I~8; 3I~10). In the classroom, film is the bridge from social practice to academic practice. The medium is useful for stimulating and improving the critical thinking skills that are important to academic literacy (Giroux, 2002, pp. 7-8).

As a form of popular culture in the writing classroom, film has a particularly important role in the development of twenty-first century literacy skills. On one level, the practitioners' integration of film into composition helps broaden the concept of the word *text*. The film selections are intended to challenge students to find meaning in aural-visual texts in addition to written texts. On another level, their use of film in writing instruction also widens the scope of the word *argument* (3I~10; 4I~2; 16I~8-9). As discussed in the second implication, the film selections are coupled with analytical frameworks to develop critical thinking skills. In the classroom, the application of interpretative frameworks and academic discourses provide ways for reading films and

deconstructing textual arguments. This writing instruction challenges students to understand how film texts are constructed. It introduces methods for decoding and analyzing the themes and theses – in short, the arguments – in the film selections. For the participants, this instruction hones student film literacy, the ability to articulate the ways images and sounds communicate meaning. As cultural studies-media literacy teachers, the participants believe this instruction is beneficial. It develops student critical reading experience with aural-visual texts and, by extension, with written texts. It challenges students to make the transition from *what* questions to *how* and *why* questions (paraphrase, 21~23; Costanzo, 1992, 2004; Thoman, et al., 2003), an important transition for first-year composition students. This transition signals the move from summarizing texts to analyzing texts. It is a literacy practice that is relevant to the writing classroom and beyond.

For the students in the study, the selection of course readings and the application of critical methodologies have contributed to their growth as thinkers and writers. Instruction in film and film study has raised their awareness of textual construction and argument. Table 9: *Emerging Literacies: Student Awareness of Texts* (on the next page) compiles student survey responses to film in composition. In the survey, students recognized that, like writing, film and other popular culture texts contain messages and use a variety of discourses and technologies to communicate arguments effectively. Comments like these were supported by other critical assessments of film. In their surveys, students acknowledged the power of film in generating affective responses. This power, in part, explains the role directors and studio systems have in shaping meaning and creating products. In addition to recognizing the power of film, students also

acknowledged its appeal for viewers. This appeal includes the medium's ability to depict a historical period, to present life lessons, to challenge personal views, and to extend personal knowledge on social issues. These responses are especially significant to composition studies and its inclusion of film in composition. Of the forty-seven students who completed the survey, many of them (about 66%) had not received writing instruction of this kind as a part of their high school English classes. For this group of community college students, this instruction is the beginning of emerging academic and critical media literacies.

Table 9

*Emerging Literacies: Student Awareness of Texts*

| Emerging Literacies                                       | Student Awareness                                                                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Film and Popular Culture Texts Contain Messages           | Understanding that film is more than entertainment                               |
|                                                           | Realizing that all art has a message or theme                                    |
|                                                           | Evaluating the messages in Hollywood movies                                      |
| Film Texts Use Discourses and Technologies to Communicate | Recognizing that directors have ways of persuading viewers                       |
|                                                           | Gaining an awareness of the parts (e.g., scenes and characters) of the film text |
| Popular Culture Texts Create Affective Responses          | Representing historical time period                                              |
|                                                           | Presenting life lessons                                                          |
|                                                           | Challenging Personal Views                                                       |
|                                                           | Extending personal knowledge on an issue                                         |

In first-year composition, it is evident that the study of film facilitates new ways of seeing and knowing. These student discoveries have positive consequences for the development of literacy skills in the writing classroom – particularly, in developing student voice. As discussed in the first implication, the use of film in composition

reestablishes the connections between home and school cultures. This kind of writing instruction emphasizes the social nature of literacy learning (Smith, 1987). When film is a literacy practice honored in the classroom, it initiates dialogue, critique, and solidarity. Students learn to identify themselves as members of the academic community. They are readers and writers who have important contributions to make to the academic conversation (18I~9; 12I~9). The inclusion of film in composition establishes new relationships with words and writing (10I~5; 6I~3). It fosters thought and the pleasures of forming and making meaning. In essence, it cultivates student voice: the rhetorical need to create arguments and to make arguments better (18I~9-10). In this study, film as a social practice motivated students to partake in the classroom community and to write essays about film. For the student participants, film in composition gave them the opportunity to experience a different approach to literacy learning in the classroom.

Ultimately, the impact of film in composition rests beyond the composition classroom. The study of film is an opportunity to think deeply about culture. Film is relevant to different times, situations, and places. It is a cultural phenomenon – the one medium that everyone attends to, that holds the potential of becoming an *event*, raising questions and dialogue on cultural and political issues (Vandervelde, 2004; Bishop, 1999b; Giroux, 2002). Films like *Notting Hill* (1999), *Mi Familia* (1995), *Vertigo* (1958), *North by Northwest* (1959), *All the Pretty Horses* (2000), *The Wild Bunch* (1969), and *Brokeback Mountain* (2005) are course readings that challenge students to think in larger terms (13I~3). In the classroom, students examine the film selections as texts transmitting subject positions on various cultural issues and related topics (e.g., in chapter four: the nature of private and public relationships and the complexity of the immigrant

experience; in chapter five: the changing conceptions of the suspense horror film and the ideological study of trespassing in the western film). They are required to read, interpret, analyze, and evaluate the textual representation of culture, race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, and more. These applications of film and film study move beyond a discussion of film narrative to a dialogue on film, culture, and identity. These dialogues are relevant to preparing students for the modern world. Through these dialogues, students become aware of the different opinions their peers have on social-cultural issues. They are introduced to public discourse and political concerns. The critical thinking skills honed through narrative-cultural and cinematic-rhetorical analyses are literacy practices students take into the world: to examine cultural differences, immigration law, gender roles, same-sex marriage, etc. When considered from this perspective, film in composition develops the literacy skills students need to evaluate national and global issues and to become agents of change.

Of course, the application of film and film study makes the field of composition socially and culturally relevant (Kress, 1999, p. 67). In this study, the participants not only embrace current theoretical understandings of literacy, but also believe in preparing students for the future. It is for this reason that film in composition is a responsible and democratic pedagogy. Its practitioners are committed to developing the critical thinking, writing, and literacy skills community college students require as forthcoming participants of the social-cultural world. Through these teaching practices, the participants create a learning environment that mobilizes dialogue about culture, power, and politics (3I~2, 3; 9I~2; 11I~8; 12I~5; 13I~4; 15I~3; 19I~8; 20I~3; Berlin, 1996; Giroux, 2002, p. 12; hooks, 1996; Schmertz, 2001). These practices cultivate a public

voice, empowering students not only to access their education but also to consider their positions on social-cultural issues and their contribution to political change. In the end, this awareness is a step toward becoming a literate writer (and reader) in the twenty-first century.

### Concluding Thoughts

*Film in composition* is a qualitative study that demonstrates how the study of film in writing instruction develops the critical thinking skills that are central to academic literacy. Based on teacher interviews, classroom observations, and artifacts (e.g., course syllabi, reading materials, film selections, writing prompts, student papers, student surveys), two cross-case analyses were constructed to illustrate a narrative-cultural and cinematic-rhetorical approach to film. As sound teaching methods and classroom practices, the cases' application of these critical methodologies show that film in composition is conducive (a) to teaching and learning philosophies, (b) to the objectives of college writing, and (c) to the development of literacy in the twenty-first century. This qualitative study contributes to the field of composition, providing writing professors and instructors a better understanding of the appeal of film and the need to create innovative pedagogies that hone student critical thinking skills.

The first chapters of this dissertation present the rationale for completing this study. My interest was grounded in the desire to contribute to an on-going conversation on film in first-year composition – most specifically, to introduce new teaching methods to inexperienced instructors and to seasoned professors of writing. The study was designed from three research questions: *What is the theoretical rationale for including*

*film in first-year writing instruction? What critical frameworks do practitioners apply to hone critical thinking skills that are essential for academic literacy? What are the implications of incorporating an aural-visual medium like film into the writing classroom?* The first of these questions was addressed in chapters one and two. These chapters present the rationale for including film in composition and the analytical frameworks scholars apply to foster critical thinking and academic writing. The second and third research questions, which are addressed in the latter half of the dissertation, turn to the first-year writing teachers (and their students) who participated in the study. These chapters introduce the interpretative frameworks and academic discourses the participants apply in the classroom. They also review the consequences of including film in first-year composition.

Conducted at multiple southern California two-year colleges, the study features four cases whose classrooms demonstrate the application of narrative-cultural and cinematic-rhetorical analysis. These case studies offer creative and yet sound film-writing pedagogies. Their teaching practices are comprehensive, consisting of film selections, critical viewing methods, classroom dialogues, writing prompts, and student papers. Bautista, Bowman, Bratton-Hayes, and Fischer have a vested interest in presenting new ways of learning, seeing, and knowing. Interpretative frameworks and academic discourses offer students different ways of understanding how film and other texts communicate. In the classroom, their students are responsive to these pedagogies. They work at developing their intellectual skills through these pedagogies, collaborative work, close readings, individual and multiple text analyses, and the application of various modes of discourse.



Within the parameters of the study, the application of narrative-cultural and cinematic-rhetorical analyses is a suitable and thoughtful practice. The participants have taken into consideration their students who come from various ethnic, cultural, and educational backgrounds. An intriguing question regarding the study concerns the concept of transferability: Is film in composition applicable to the teachers and students at other academic institutions? Two additional cases not covered in the dissertation but completed at four-year institutions in and near Los Angeles County suggest that narrative-cultural and cinematic-rhetorical analyses are applicable to students at public and private colleges and universities. Whether or not the students in these classrooms respond in similar ways to those at the community college is left open for further research.

At the end of this study, what remains conclusive is that film in composition requires further research into the application of narrative, cultural, cinematic, and rhetorical analyses. As expected, the study of film as content is a more widely practiced film-writing pedagogy. Given the educational backgrounds of the teacher participants, it is not surprising to see a narrative-cultural approach thriving among community college writing teachers. It would be interesting to understand other pairings more deeply – in particular, the application of cinematic-rhetorical analysis, or the study of film genre in composition. This practice is fairly uncommon yet one that merits further consideration. Other than *Reel conversations: Reading films with young adults* (1996), *Visual messages: Integrating imagery into instruction* (1999), and *Great films and how to teach them* (2004), little scholarship exists for this promising composition pedagogy. Research on this critical methodology (and other analytical frameworks) might focus on the kinds of

grading rubrics college writing teachers implement in these particular classrooms and the ways teachers work closely with student writing to develop strong arguments on film.

Equally important is to complete research on the limitations of the participants' classroom practices. In this study, the participants, for the most part, assigned different kinds of academic writing to develop student critical responses to texts. This classroom practice raises a fascinating question regarding pedagogy: To what extent did the writing the teachers assigned in their classrooms subvert other forms of critical thinking?

Although the participants incorporated film into composition to develop critical thinking, it is interesting that they did not consider filmmaking (or other forms of film production) as an option to writing about film. Their approach to film study is indicative of how writing is privileged over other forms of textual production even in their cultural-studies-based-writing classrooms and how teachers must continue to rethink their pedagogical viewpoints and choices.

By the same token, an investigation in the latter area might also delve into research on alternative forms of 'composition.' In this study, one community college teacher discussed implementing graded film production assignments in order to extend student conceptions of *composition*, *argument*, and *literacy* (12I~7-8). Due to logistical constraints, this participant (and her classroom practices) was not studied in further detail. Her approach to film in composition, although rare, has great potential in demonstrating the critical thinking skills involved in producing different kinds of 'composition.' It can also inform teachers of the kinds of multi-modal assessment measures needed to evaluate student critical response. An investigation on this topic might revisit of the film-writing pedagogies proposed in the 70s and 80s (Adams & Kline, 1975; Costanzo, 1984, 1986;

Gallagher, 1988; Green, 1978; Primeau, 1974), which are now being considered by cultural studies and media literacy advocates (Firek, 2003; George 2002; Hull, 2003; Miller & Norris, 2007; Thoman et al., 2003).

This research (and other investigations like it) is the future of film in composition. As new technologies become available and affordable at various colleges and universities, it will important to understand how the application of this medium impacts teaching and classroom practices in the composition classroom.

## REFERENCES

- Adams, D., & Kline, R. (1975). The use of films in teaching composition. *College Composition and Communication*, 26(3), 258-262.
- Adolescent literacy captures the spotlight: What are the issues and what do they mean for educators? (2004, Sept.). *The Council Chronicle: The National Council of Teachers of English*, 14(1), 1, 6.
- Alvermann, D., Moon, J. S., & Hagood, M. C. (1999). Approaches to teaching using popular culture and the politics of pleasure. In *Popular culture in the classroom: Teaching and researching critical media literacy* (pp. 22-40). Chicago: IRA.
- Allender, D. (2004). Popular culture in the classroom. *English Journal*, 93(3), 12-14.
- Amelio, R. (1969). *Willowbrook: Cinema study project*. Dayton, OH: Geo A. Pflaum.
- Anderson, J. (Director). (2003). *Normal*. [Motion picture]. United States: Home Box Office.
- Applebee, Arthur N. (1992). The background for reform. In J. Langer (Ed.), *Literature Instruction: A Focus on Student Response* (pp. 1-18). Urbana, IL: NCTE.
- Arnheim, R. (1980). A plea for visual thinking. In W. J. T. Mitchell (Ed.), *The language of Images* (pp. 171-179). Chicago: U. of Chicago P.
- Aronowitz, S. (1989). Working-class identity and celluloid fantasies in the electronic age. In H. Giroux, et al. (Eds.), *Popular culture, schooling, and everyday life* (pp. 197-217). Granby, NY: Bergin & Garvey.
- Aronowitz, S. & Giroux, H.A. (1991). *Postmodern education*. Minneapolis, MN: U. of Minnesota P.

- Axelrod, R., & Cooper, C. (2004). *The St. Martin's guide to writing* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.
- Baird, R. (n.d.). Hitchcock's use of profiles in *Vertigo*. *Images Journal*, 2. Retrieved Jan. 25, 2006, from <http://www.imagesjournal.com/issue02/features/vertprof.htm>
- Barnes, V. (1976). Eight basic considerations for the teaching of film. *College Composition and Communication*, 27(1), 32-35.
- Bartholomae, D. (1997). Inventing the university. In V. Villanueva (Ed.), *Cross-talk in comp theory: A reader* (pp. 589-619). Urbana, IL: NCTE. (Original work published 1985)
- Bartholomae, D. (1979). Teaching basic writing: An alternative to basic skills. *Journal of Basic Writing*, 2(2), 85-109.
- Berger, J. (1972). *Ways of seeing*. New York: Penguin.
- Berlin, J. A. (1991). Composition and cultural studies. In C. M. Hurlbert & M. Blitz (Eds.), *Composition & resistance* (pp. 47-55). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Berlin, J. A. (1997). Contemporary composition: The major pedagogical theories. In V. Villanueva (Ed.), *Cross-talk in comp theory: A reader* (pp. 233-248). Urbana, IL: NCTE. (Original work published in 1982)
- Berlin, J. (1992). Introduction: A provisional definition. In J. Berlin & M. Vivion (Eds.), *Cultural studies in the English classroom* (pp. vii-xvi). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Berlin, J. A. (1996). *Rhetorics, poetics, and cultures: Refiguring college English studies*. Urbana, IL: NCTE.

- Berlin, J. A., & Vivion, M. J. (Eds.). (1992). *Cultural studies in the English classroom*.  
Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Berthoff, A. (1988). Preface. In *Forming/thinking/writing* (pp. 1-7). Portsmouth, NH:  
Boynton.
- Bishop, E. (Ed.). (1999a). *Cinema-(to)-graphy: Film and writing in contemporary  
composition courses*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Bishop, E. (1999b). Introduction. In E. Bishop (Ed.), *Cinema-(to)-graphy: Film and  
writing in contemporary composition courses* (pp. vii-xv). Portsmouth, NH:  
Heinemann.
- Bishop, E. (1999c). Reading race in the multicultural classroom. In E. Bishop (Ed.),  
*Cinema-(to)-graphy: Film and writing in contemporary composition courses* (pp.  
56-69). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Blau, S. (1995, Mar. 23-25). *Discovering voice through media writing*. Paper presented  
at the Conference on College Composition and Communication, Washington, DC.  
(ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 386725)
- Bordwell, D., & Thompson, K. (2001). *Film art: An introduction* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York:  
McGraw-Hill.
- Boyd, V., & Robitaille, M. (1987). Composition and Popular Culture: From mindless  
consumers to critical writers. *English Journal*, 76(1), 51-53.
- Brooks, J. (1998). Teenagers evaluating modern media. *English Journal*, 87(1), 21-24.

- Bruder, C. R. (1994, Apr. 7-9). "Making the devil useful": *Film studies in the English curriculum*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of College English Association, Orlando, FL. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 375407)
- Bruffee, K. (1997). Collaborative learning and the 'conversation of mankind.' In V. Villanueva (Ed.), *Cross-talk in comp theory: A reader* (pp. 393-414). Urbana, IL: NCTE. (Original work published 1984)
- Caille, P. (1999). Interpreting the personal: The ordering of the narrative of their/our own reality. In E. Bishop (Ed.), *Cinema-(to)-graphy: Film and writing in contemporary composition courses* (pp. 1-21). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Chanock, K. (1999). Using film to teach coherence in writing. In E. Bishop (Ed.), *Cinema-(to)-graphy* (pp. 125-139). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Christel, M. (2001). Film in the literature class: Not just dessert anymore. In *Seeing and believing: How to teach media literacy in the English classroom* (pp. 68-88). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Cohen, A., & Brawer, F. (2003). *The American community college* (4<sup>th</sup> ed). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Colebrook, C. (2002). Cinema. In *Giles Deleuze* (pp. 29-54). London: Routledge.
- Considine, D. M., & Haley, G. E. (1999a). Media literacy: The purpose, principles, and curriculum connections. In *Visual messages: Integrating imagery into Instruction* (pp. 21-58). Englewood, CO: Teacher Ideas P.

- Considine, D. M., & Haley, G. E. (1999b). Media literacy gains momentum: From television to telling vision. In *Visual messages: Integrating imagery into instruction* (pp. 1-20). Englewood, CO: Teacher Ideas P.
- Considine, D. M., & Haley, G. E. (1999c). Movies as mentors: Teaching with motion pictures. In *Visual messages: Integrating imagery into instruction* (pp. 267-337). Englewood, CO: Teacher Ideas P.
- Considine, D. M., & Haley, G. E. (1999d). Preface. In *Visual messages: Integrating imagery into instruction* (pp. xiii-xxii). Englewood, CO: Teacher Ideas P.
- Corrigan, T. (1999). *Film and literature: An introduction and reader*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice.
- Corrigan, T. (2004). *A Short Guide to Writing about Film* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: Pearson/Longman.
- Corrigan, T., & White, P. (2004). *The film experience: An introduction*. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's.
- Costanzo, W. V. (1984). *Double exposure: Composing through writing and film*. Upper Montclair, NJ: Boynton/Cook.
- Costanzo, W. V. (1986). Film as composition. *College Composition and Communication*, 37(1), 79-86.
- Costanzo, W. (2004). *Great films and how to teach them*. Urbana, IL: NCTE.
- Costanzo, W. (1992). *Reading the movies: Twelve great films on video and how to teach them*. Urbana, IL: NCTE.



- Costanzo, W. (1985). Visual resources for basic writers: A sampling of films, videotapes, texts, and methods. *Teaching English in the Two-Year College*, 12(2), 130-139.
- Cruz, D. (1999). Mapping the use of feature films in composition classes. In E. Bishop (Ed.), *Cinema-(to)-graphy: Film and writing in contemporary composition courses* (pp. 100-115). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Dombeck, K., & Herndon, S. (2004). *Critical passages: Teaching the transition to college composition*. New York: Teachers College P.
- Dunbar-Odom, D. (1999). Representing student culture: Field research and John Singleton's *Higher Learning* in the composition classroom. In E. Bishop (Ed.), *Cinema-(to)-graphy: Film and writing in contemporary composition courses* (pp. 45-55). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Dziedzic, B. B. (2002). When multigenre meets multimedia: Reading films to understand books. *English Journal*, 92(2), 69-75.
- Elbow, P. (1998). *Writing without teachers*. New York: Oxford UP.
- Erlandson, D. A. (et al.). (1993). *Doing naturalistic inquiry: A guide to methods*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Evans, J. (2004). From Sheryl Crow to Homer Simpson: Literature and composition through pop culture. *English Journal*, 93(3), 32-38.
- Far, S. S. (2004). In the land of the free. In J. Moser & A. Watters (Eds.), *Creating America: Reading and writing arguments* (4<sup>th</sup> ed., pp. 187-196). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Fehlman, R. H. (1994). Teaching film in the 1990s. *English Journal*, 83(1), 39-46.

- Fehlman, R. H. (1985). Viewing film and television as whole language instruction. *English Journal*, 85(2), 43-51.
- Firek, H. (2003a). Constructing knowledge with video projects. In *Ten easy ways to use technology in the English classroom* (pp. 15-28). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Firek, H. (2003b). Movies and novels: A match made in Hollywood. In *Ten easy ways to use technology in the English classroom* (pp. 41-49). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Fischer, L. (1999). Apocalypse yesterday: Writing, literacy, and the "threat" of "electric technology." In E. Bishop (Ed.), *Cinema-(to)-graphy: Film and writing in contemporary composition courses* (pp. 170-180). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Fitts, K., & France, A. W. (1995). *Left margins: Cultural studies and composition pedagogy*. New York: State U. of New York P.
- Foreman, J., & Shumway, D. R. (1992). Cultural Studies: Reading visual texts. In J. A. Berlin & M. J. Vivion (Eds.), *Cultural Studies in the English classroom* (pp. 244-261). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- France, A. W. (1993). Assigning places: The function of introductory composition as a cultural discourse. *College English*, 55(6), 593-609.
- Garnier, K. (Director). (2004). *Iron-jawed angels*. [Motion picture]. United States: Home Box Office.
- Gallagher, B. (1988). Film study and the teaching of English: Technology and the future of pedagogy. *English Journal*, 77(7), 58-61.
- Geertz, C. (1973). Thick description: Toward an interpretative theory of culture. In *Interpretation of culture* (pp. 3-30). New York: Basic Books.

- George, D. (2002). From analysis to design: Visual communication in the teaching of writing. *College Composition and Communication*, 54(1), 11-39.
- George, D. & Trimbur, J. (2001). Cultural studies and composition. In G. Tate (Ed.), *A guide to composition pedagogies* (pp. 71-91). New York: Oxford UP.
- Giroux, H. (2002). Breaking in to the movies: An introduction. In *Breaking in to the movies: Film and the culture of politics* (pp. 1-16). Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Giroux, H. A. (1994). Doing cultural studies: Youth and the challenge of pedagogy. *Harvard Educational Review*, 64(3), 278-308.
- Giroux, H. A., Simon, R. I., & Contributors. (1989). *Popular culture, schooling, and everyday life*. Granby, NY: Bergin & Garvey.
- Golden, J. (2001). *Reading in the dark: Using film as tool in the English classroom*. Urbana, IL: NCTE.
- Goodman, B. (2001). The merchants of cool: A report on the creators & marketers of popular culture for teenagers. *Frontline*. Boston: WGBH Educational Foundation & PBS Video.
- Guista, M. (1992). Siskel and Ebert, move over: Using film to teach critical thinking. *Teaching English in the Two-Year College*, 19(3), 206-209.
- Green, A. (1978, Mar. 30-Apr. 1). *The 'how' of film and composition*. Paper presented at the Conference on College Composition and Communication, Denver, CO. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 168030)
- Harrington, J. (1973). *The rhetoric of film*. New York: Holt.

- Harris, J. (1999). Reading the right thing. In E. Bishop (Ed.), *Cinema-(to)-graphy: Film and writing in contemporary composition courses* (pp. 70-84). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Haspel, P. (2002). Y2K+1: Technology, community-college students, the millennium, and Stanley Kubrick's 2001: A Space Odyssey. *Teaching English in the Two-Year College*, 29(3), 250-258.
- Heyda, J. (1999). Challenging antiwriting bias in the teaching of film. In E. Bishop (Ed.), *Cinema-(to)-graphy: Film and writing in contemporary composition courses* (pp. 152-169). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Hitchcock, A. (Director). (1964). *Marnie*. [Motion picture]. United States: Universal Pictures.
- Hitchcock, A. (Director). (1959). *North by Northwest*. [Motion picture]. United States: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- Hitchcock, A. (Director). (1960). *Psycho*. [Motion picture]. United States: Paramount Pictures.
- Hitchcock, A. (Director). (1948). *Rope*. [Motion picture]. United States: Warner Bros.
- Hitchcock, A. (Director). (1951). *Strangers on a train*. [Motion picture]. United States: Warner Bros.
- Hitchcock, A. (Director). (1958). *Vertigo*. [Motion picture]. United States: Paramount Pictures.
- Hobbs, R. (2001). Improving reading comprehension by using media literacy activities. *Voices from the Middle*, 8(4), 44-50.

- Hobbs, R. (2006). Non-optimal uses of video in the classroom. *Learning, Media and Technology*, 31(1), 35-50.
- Hobbs, R. (2001). *Seven great debates in the media literacy movement – circa 2001*. Retrieved July 12, 2007, from the Center for Media Literacy Web site:  
[http://www.medialit.org/reading\\_room/article2.html](http://www.medialit.org/reading_room/article2.html)
- Hobbs, R. (1998). The Simpsons meet Mark Twain: Analyzing popular media texts in the classroom. *English Journal*, 87(1), 49-51.
- Hobbs, R. (1994). Teaching media literacy – Yo! Are you hip to this? *Media Studies Journal*, 8(4), 135-145.
- Hobbs, R. (1993). *Understanding the media: A practical guide by Andrew Hart* (Review). *Journal of Communication*, 43(1), 180-184.
- Holbrook, H. T. (1987). Popular Culture and English. *English Journal*, 76(1), 32-34.
- hooks, b. (1996). Introduction: Making movie magic. In *Reel to real: Race, sex and class at the movies*, (pp. 1-9). New York: Routledge.
- Houston, J. W. (2004). A tapestry of hope. In J. Moser & A. Watters (Eds.), *Creating America: Reading and writing arguments* (4<sup>th</sup> ed., pp. 146-151). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Hull, G. A. (2003). Youth culture and digital media: New literacies for new times. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 38(2), 229-233.
- Hunt, T., & Hunt, B. (2004). Popular culture: Building connections with our students. *English Journal*, 93(3), 80-83.

- Johnson, J. & Johnson, M. (Hosts). (2006, Nov.). Alfred Hitchcock: Part 2 [WTD11].  
*Watching the Directors*. Podcast retrieved June 2007, from <http://watchingthedirectors.com>
- Johnson, J. & Johnson, M. (Hosts). (2007, May). Alfred Hitchcock: Part 3 [WTD 22].  
*Watching the Directors*. Podcast retrieved June 2007, from <http://watchingthedirectors.com>
- Kasper, L. (1999). Print, film, and hypertexts: A multimedia model for discipline-based ESL instruction. *Teaching English in the Two-Year College*, 26(4), 406-414.
- Kasper, L., & Singer, R. (2001). Unspoken content: Silent film in the ESL classroom. *Teaching English in the Two-Year College*, 29(1), 16-31.
- Kress, G. (1999). "English" at the crossroads: Rethinking curricula of communication in the context of the turn to the visual. In G. E. Hawisher & C. L. Selfe (Eds.), *Passions, pedagogies, and 21<sup>st</sup> century technologies* (pp. 66-88). Urbana, IL: NCTE.
- Kress, G. (2003a). The futures of literacy: Modes, logics and affordances. In *Literacy in the new media age* (pp. 1-8). London: Routledge.
- Kress, G. (2003b). Preface. In *Literacy in the new media age* (pp. 9-15). London: Routledge.
- Krueger, E. (1998). Media literacy does work, trust me. *English Journal*, 87(1), 17-20.
- Krueger, E. & Christel, M. (2001). *Seeing and believing: How to teach media literacy in the English classroom*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Lamb, B. (1998). Rhetoric: Coming to terms. *English Journal*, 87(1), 108-109.

- Langer, J. A. (1992). *Literature instruction: A focus on student response*. Urbana, IL: NCTE.
- LeCompte, M. D., & Preissle, J. (1993). *Ethnography and qualitative design in educational Research* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed). San Diego, CA: Academic P.
- Lee, A. (Director). *Brokeback Mountain*. [Motion picture]. United States: Focus Features.
- Lehman, P., & Luhr, W. (2003). *Thinking about movies: Watching, questioning, enjoying* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Locke, J. (1997, Mar. 18). Last laugh: Was Hitchcock's masterpiece a private joke? *Bright Lights Journal*. Retrieved Jan. 25, 2006, from [http://brightlightsfilm.com/18/18\\_vertigo.html](http://brightlightsfilm.com/18/18_vertigo.html)
- Lund, D. (1998). Video production in the English language arts classroom. *English Journal*, 87(1), 78-83.
- Lundsford, A., & Ruszkiewicz, J. (2001). *Everything's an argument* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: Bedford/St. Martin's.
- Maloney, E., & Miller, P. (1999). *Rear Window*: Looking at film theory through pedagogy. In E. Bishop (Ed.), *Cinema-(to)-graphy: Film and writing in contemporary composition courses* (pp. 32-44). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Maness, K. (2004). Teaching media-savvy students about popular media, *English Journal*, 93(3), 46-51.
- Masterman, L. (1985). *Teaching the media*. London: Comedia/MK Media P.

- Maxwell, J. (1996). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach (applied social research methods)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Mazer, S. (1999). *Film and the composition classroom: Using visual media to motivate first-year writers*. Retrieved Aug. 26, 2004, from <http://sites.unc.edu/daniel/131spring99/papers/Mazer.html>
- McCarthy, C. (1993). *All the pretty horses*. New York: Vintage.
- McComiskey, B. (1997). Social-process rhetorical inquiry: Cultural studies methodologies for critical writing about advertisements. *Journal of Advanced Composition*, 17(3), 381-400.
- Monseau, V. R. (Ed.). (1998). Media literacy [Special issue]. *English Journal*, 87(1).
- Messaris, P. (2001, Feb.). New literacies in action: Visual education. *Reading Online*, 4(7). Retrieved Sept. 21, 2004, from <http://www.readingonline.org/newliteracies/action/messaris/index.html>
- Messaris, P. (1994). *Visual "literacy": Image, mind, and reality*. Boulder, CO: Westview P.
- Michell, R. (Director). (1999). *Notting Hill*. [Motion picture]. United States: Polygram Filmed Entertainment.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). Sampling: Bounding the collection of data. In *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., pp. 27-34). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing.
- Miller, S., & Fox, D. (2005). *Supporting Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Learners in English Education*. Retrieved July 17, 2007, from the NCTE Web site: <http://www.ncte.org/groups/cee/positions/122892.htm>



- Miller, sj, & Norris, L. (2007). *Unpacking the loaded teacher matrix: Negotiating space and time between university and secondary English classrooms*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Miners, Z., & Pascopella, A. (2007, Oct.). The new literacies. *District Administration: The Magazine of School District Management*. Retrieved Oct. 9, 2007, from <http://www.districtadministration.com/viewarticle.aspx?articleid=1292>
- Monaco, J. (2000). *How to read a film: Movies, media, and multimedia*. New York: Oxford UP.
- Moon, B. (1999). *Literary terms: A practical glossary*. Urbana, IL: NCTE.
- Moore, M. (Director). (2002). *Bowling for Columbine*. [Motion picture]. Canada: Alliance Atlantis Communications.
- Moser, J. & Watters, A. (2004). *Creating America: Reading and writing arguments*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Moss, R. F. (1985). English composition and the feature film. *Journal of General Education*, 37(2), 122-143.
- Motion Picture Association of America. (2007). *2006 US Movie Attendance Study*. Retrieved Jan. 15, 2008, from <http://www.mpa.org/MovieAttendanceStudy.pdf>.
- Mulligan, R. (Director). (1962). *To kill a mockingbird*. [Motion picture]. United States: Universal Studios.
- Murray, D. (1997). Teach writing as a process not product. In V. Villanueva (Ed.), *Cross-talk in comp theory: A reader* (pp. 3-6). Urbana, IL: NCTE. (Original work published 1972)

Nava, G. (Director). (1995). *Mi familia*. [Motion picture]. United States: American Zoetrope.

*On composing with nonprint media*. (2003). Retrieved Jan. 15, 2006, from the NCTE Web site: <http://www.ncte.org/print.asp?id=114919&node=618>

“Open the windows” of literature. (2004, Sept.). *The Council Chronicle: The National Council of Teachers of English*, 14(1), 9.

Peckinpah, S. (Director). (1969). *The wild bunch*. [Motion pictures]. United States: Warner Bros.

Penfield, E. (1998). *Study guide: Literary visions* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Saddle River, NJ: Prentice.

Penrod, D. (1997a). Pop goes the content: Teaching the ugly and the ordinary. In *Miss Grundy doesn't teach here anymore: Popular culture and the composition classroom* (pp. 1-21). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Penrod, D. (1997b). Preface. In *Miss Grundy doesn't teach here anymore: Popular culture and the composition classroom* (pp. vii-x). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Primeau, R. (1974). Film-editing and the revision process: Student as self-editor. *College Composition and Communication*, 25(5), 405-410.

Ramage, J., Bean, J., & Johnson, J. (2006). *The Allyn & Bacon guide to writing* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: Pearson/Longman.

Roiphe, A. (1991). Why marriages fail. In G. Muller & H. Wiener (Eds.) *The short prose reader* (6<sup>th</sup> ed., pp. 361-371). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Rose, M. (1990a). I just wanna be average. In *Lives on the boundary: A moving account of the struggles and achievements of America's educationally unprepared* (pp. 11-37). New York: Penguin.

- Rose, M. (1990b). Our schools and our children. In *Lives on the boundary: A moving account of the struggles and achievements of America's educationally unprepared* (pp. 1-9). New York: Penguin.
- Rosenblatt, L. (1995). *Literature as exploration*. New York: MLA.
- Ruszkiewicz, J., Anderson, D., & Friend, C. (2006). *Beyond words: Reading and writing in a visual age*. New York: Pearson/Longman.
- Ruszkiewicz, J., Anderson, D., & Friend, C. (2006). Film stories of the twentieth century. In *Beyond words: Reading and writing in a visual age* (pp. 278-281). New York: Pearson/Longman.
- Ruszkiewicz, J., Anderson, D., & Friend, C. (2006). Moving pictures: Writing to tell stories. In *Beyond words: Reading and writing in a visual age* (pp. 246-293). New York: Pearson/Longman.
- Ryle, G. (1971). Thinking and reflecting. In *Collected papers* (Vol. 2, pp. 465-479). London: Hutchinson.
- Ryle, G. (1971). The thinking of thoughts. In *Collected papers* (Vol. 2, pp. 480-496). London: Hutchinson.
- Salmon, V. (1999). Educating *with* Rita. In E. Bishop (Ed.), *Cinema-(to)-graphy: Film and writing in contemporary composition courses* (pp. 140-151). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Sapolsky, B, & Molitor, F (1996). Content trends in contemporary horror films. In J. B. Weaver & R. Tamborini, *Horror films: Current research on audience preferences and reactions* (pp. 33-47). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Assoc.

- Schafer, G. (2000). Prime time literature in the high school. *English Journal*, 90(2), 93-96.
- Schlib, J. (1991). Cultural studies, postmodernism, and composition. In P. Harkin & J. Schlib (Eds.), *Contending with words: Composition and rhetoric in a postmodern age* (pp. 173-188). New York: MLA.
- Schlib, J., & Clifford, J. (2001). *Ways of making literature matter: A brief guide*. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's.
- Schmertz, J. (2001). *Filmcomp: Reframing writing pedagogy through film*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Texas A&M University.
- Schmertz, J. & Trefzer, A. (1999). Reading multiculturally and rhetorically: *Higher Learning* in the composition classroom. In E. Bishop (Ed.), *Cinema-(to)-graphy: Film and writing in contemporary composition courses* (pp. 85-99). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Semali, L. (2000). Media, technology, and schools. In *Literacy in multimedia America: Integrating media education across the curriculum* (pp. 1-27). New York: Falmer P.
- Semali, L. (2002). Preface. In L. Semali (Ed.), *Transmediation in the classroom: A semiotic-based media literacy framework*, (pp. ix-xiv). New York: Peter Lang.
- Shannon, H., & Smith, R. (2007). A case for the community college's Open Access Mission. In B. Townsend & K. Dougherty (Eds.), *Community College Missions in the 21st Century: New Directions for Community Colleges* (pp. 15-21). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Shoos, D., George, D., & Comprone, J. (1993). Twin Peaks and the look of television: Visual literacy in the writing class. *The Journal of Advanced Composition*, 13(2), 459-475.
- Showalter, J. (2004). Vows. In K. A. Ackley (Eds.) *Essays from contemporary culture* (pp. 257-264). Boston: Heine.
- Siegal, R. (1999, Dec. 20). Commentary: Great imagination heist (featuring guest Reynolds Price). *All Things Considered*. Retrieved Sept. 21, 2004, from ProQuest database.
- Smith, F. (1987). *Joining the literacy club: Further essays into education*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Standards for the English language arts*. (2007). Retrieved July 12, 2007, from the NCTE Web site: <http://www.ncte.org/about/over/standards/110846.htm>
- Street, B. (2001). The new literacy studies. In E. Cushman, E. Kintgen, B. Kroll, & M. Rose (Eds.), *Literacy: A critical sourcebook* (pp. 430-442). Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's. (Original work published 1993)
- Teasley, A. B., & Wilder, A. (1997). *Reel conversations: Reading films with young adults*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Thoman, E. (1998). Media literacy: A guided tour of selected resources for teaching. *English Journal*, 87(1), 34-37.
- Thoman, E., Jolls, T., Share, J., Bordac, S., & Tompkins. (2003). *Media Lit Kit: Overview and orientation guide*. Santa Monica: Center for Media Literacy.
- Thornton, B. B. (Director). (2000). *All the pretty horses*. [Motion picture]. United States: Columbia Pictures Corp.

- Toufexis, A. (1997). Love: The right chemistry. In R. Axelrod & C. Cooper (Eds.), *The St. Martin's guide to writing* (5<sup>th</sup> ed., pp. 159-161). Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.
- Trimbur, J. (1993). Composition studies: Postmodern or popular. In A. R. Gere (Ed.), *Into the field: Sites of composition studies* (pp. 117-132). New York: MLA.
- Trimbur, J. (1997). Consensus and difference in collaborative learning. In V. Villanueva (Ed.), *Cross-talk in comp theory: A reader* (pp. 439-456). Urbana, IL: NCTE. (Original work published 1989)
- Trimbur, J. (1988). Cultural studies and teaching of writing. *Focuses*, 1(2), 5-8.
- Turner, G. (1999). Film languages. In *Film as social practice* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed., pp. 51-76). New York: Routledge.
- Vandervelde, M. (2004). *Films and friends: Starting and maintaining a movie group*. New York: St Martin's.
- Vetrie, M. (2004). Using film to increase literacy skills. *English Journal*, 93(3), 39-45.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1962). The development of scientific concepts in childhood. In E. Hanfmann & G. Vakar (Eds., Trans.), *Thought and language* (pp. 82-118). New York: MIT P and Wiley & Sons.
- Wallowitz, L. (2004). Reading as resistance: Gendered messages in literature and media. *English Journal*, 93(3), 26-31.
- Wicks, U. (1983). Studying film as integrated text. *Rhetoric Review*, 2(1), 51-62.
- Wolff, T. (1997). On being a real westerner. In R. Axelrod & C. Cooper (Eds.), *The St. Martin's guide to writing* (5<sup>th</sup> ed., pp. 26-28). Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.
- Wood, W. J. (1998). Double desire: Overlapping discourses in a film writing course. *College English*, 60(3), 278-300.

Worsnop, C. M. (1999). *Screening images: Ideas for media education*. Mississauga, ON: Wright Communications.

Writing Study Group of the NCTE Executive Committee. (2004, Nov.). *NCTE beliefs about the teaching of writing*. Retrieved June 18, 2005, from the NCTE Web site: <http://www.ncte.org/about/over/positions/category/write/118876.htm>

Wyrick, J. (2004). *Steps to writing well with additional readings* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Thomson/Wadsworth.

Yancey, K. B. (2004). Made not only in words: Composition in a new key. *College Composition and Communication*, 56(2), 297-328.

## APPENDIX A - LETTERS OF INTRODUCTION

The following letters of introduction here open with a specific structure, where I introduce myself and the study I am conducting. I explain the criteria for participant selection and welcome the help, suggestions, and information respondents have to offer regarding their own teaching practices and the pedagogies of other writing colleagues. In most letters, my announcement for participants ends with an invitation to include course syllabi, writing prompts, film assignments, and includes my phone number as another form of contact.

### Letter of Introduction A

The following letter is an informal letter of introduction sent to former colleagues with whom I had attended school.

Hi (Name of Colleague)!

This is Beatriz Amaya-Anderson, one of your former colleagues. I attended the English program at (Name of the College or University) during (Date of Attendance). We had a few classes together: (Name of the Professors and Courses). Anyway, I'm working on my dissertation right now, and I am wondering if you and/or any of your colleagues include film in your college writing courses using a cultural studies framework. I am particularly interested in classroom practices – that is, how teachers use film (e.g., feature films, short films, and/or film clips) to develop critical thinking skills that are necessary for academic writing. I would appreciate the help, suggestions, and/or information you have to offer. My e-mail address is banderson@ulv.edu, and my phone number is (909) 593-3511, extension 4361.

Many thanks!

### Letter of Introduction B:

The following letter is a general letter of introduction sent to English departments chairs and writing programs directors.

Hello (Name of the Professor or Instructor)!

I am currently working on my dissertation in composition studies, and your name (and / or department) was recommended to me by (Name, Name of College or University). I am seeking participants for a study on film in first-year



composition. I am wondering if you could assist me by forwarding an announcement to your writing faculty. My participant request appears below.

Sincerely,

Beatriz Amaya-Anderson

-----  
FILM IN COMPOSITION

I am currently soliciting participants for a dissertation study on film in college composition. I am looking for writing professors and instructors in southern California who include film in their writing courses using a cultural studies framework. I am particularly interested in classroom practices - that is, how teachers use film (e.g., feature films, short films, and/or film clips) to develop critical thinking skills that are necessary for academic writing.

The purpose of the dissertation is to answer questions of theory and practice. What does the study of film have to offer composition studies? How is film incorporated into the writing classroom? What kind of films work best with students? Should entire films or film clips be used in the classroom? What do classroom and at-home assignments look like? To answer these questions, I plan to look over course materials (e.g., syllabi, film assignments, selected readings, writing prompts, etc.), conduct interviews with professors and instructors, and, hopefully, complete classroom observations in southern California.

I would appreciate the help, suggestions, and/or information you have to offer. Course syllabi, writing prompts, and film assignments are welcomed. My email address is banderson@ulv.edu, and my phone number is (909) 593-3511, extension 4361.

Many thanks!

Beatriz Amaya-Anderson

Letter of Introduction C:

The next letter of introduction was sent to professors and instructors who were recommended to me by network selection.

Hello (Name of Professor or Instructor),

I am a graduate student in English at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. I am currently soliciting participants for a dissertation study on film in college composition. I am looking for writing professors and instructors in southern

California who include film in their writing courses using a cultural studies framework. I am particularly interested in classroom practices – that is, how teachers use film (e.g., feature films, short films, and/or film clips) to develop critical thinking skills that are necessary for academic writing.

The purpose of the dissertation is to answer questions of theory and practice. What does the study of film have to offer composition studies? How is film incorporated into the writing classroom? What kind of films work best with students? Should entire films or film clips be used in the classroom? What do classroom and at-home assignments look like? To answer these questions, I plan to look over course materials (e.g., syllabi, film assignments, selected readings, writing prompts, etc.), conduct interviews with professors and instructors, and, hopefully, complete classroom observations in southern California.

I am contacting you because your teaching practices were recommended to me by (a mutual colleague or one of your colleagues), (Name of Colleague). I would appreciate the help, suggestions, and/or information you have to offer. If you are willing to send course syllabi, writing prompts, and film assignments, it would be appreciated as well. My email address is banderson@ulv.edu, and my phone number is (909) 593-3511, extension 4361.

Sincerely,

Beatriz Amaya-Anderson

Letter of Introduction D:

A form e-mail was composed to contact the participants (contextualize our initial meeting in Fall 2005's Dissertation Announcement / Request), to inform them of my progress (IRB approval), and to request their help once again (for an official interview). In this e-mail, I added important information regarding the length of our meeting (about one hour), the Teacher Consent Form (the need for a document signature), and a brief statement on how my research project is supported by Indiana University of Pennsylvania's Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects.

Hello, (Participant's Name)!

Last year, I wrote to you about my dissertation regarding film in first-year composition. If you recall, I expressed an interest in soliciting participants for my study. You were kind to (meet with / speak with / e-mail) me regarding your application of film study in your classroom in (Date of Meeting).

Having received IRB approval from Indiana University of Pennsylvania, I am writing, once again, to conduct an official teacher interview with you. The interview will only take about an hour of your time, during which I will record

our conversation and ask you to sign a Teacher Consent Form, a document granting me permission to include your information in my dissertation study.

I look forward to working with you once again. Please let me know what times (and locations) are convenient for you.

Many thanks,

Beatriz Amaya-Anderson, Ph.D. Candidate  
Indiana University of Pennsylvania  
English Graduate Department  
(909) 593-3511, x4361

*This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (Phone: 724-357-7730).*

## APPENDIX B - CONSENT FORMS

The following consent forms were presented to the writing practitioners and their students. Each participant was informed of the confidentiality of the collected data and was assured the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

### Teacher Informed Consent

Working title: **Film in composition: Developing critical thinking skills through the study of film in first-year composition courses**

You are invited to participate in a research study. The following information is provided in order to help you make an informed decision whether or not to participate. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

The significance of this research is to assist writing teachers in understanding how the application of film study helps develop student critical thinking skills that are essential to academic writing. Participation in this study will involve a recorded interview (no longer than 90 minutes) and possibly a classroom observation (anywhere from a one-week to a three-week visit). Participation will be documented through interview and observations notes, which will be transcribed and made available for review. To understand the application of film study in the teaching of writing, this research study will also involve collecting relevant course materials (e.g., syllabi, film assignments, selected readings, writing prompts, student writing, etc.) from the professor. There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this research.

You may find the research experience enjoyable and the information helpful to your teaching practices and classroom applications of film study in writing instruction. The information obtained in this study may help writing practitioners to better understand the effectiveness of film study in the teaching of writing. Research findings may be published in a composition journal and/or presented at a composition conference, but all identities will be confidential.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with me. If you choose to participate, you may withdraw at any time by notifying the Project Director, Dr. Bennett A. Rafoth, or me. Upon your request to withdraw, all information pertaining to you will be destroyed. If you choose to participate, all information will be held in strict confidence.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign the statement below.

**Researcher:**

Beatriz Amaya-Anderson, Ph.D. Candidate  
Indiana University of Pennsylvania  
English Department, 110 Leonard Hall  
Indiana, PA 15705  
909-593-3511, x4361  
banderson@ulv.edu

**Project Director:**

Dr. Bennett A. Rafoth  
Indiana University of Pennsylvania  
English Department, 110 Leonard Hall  
Indiana, PA 15705  
724-357-3029  
brafoth@iup.edu

*This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (Phone: 724-357-7730).*

**Teacher Informed Consent****VOLUNTARY CONSENT FORM:**

I have read and understand the information on the form and I consent to volunteer to be a subject in this study. I understand that my teacher interview and/or classroom observation is/are completely confidential and that I have the right to withdraw at any time. I have received an unsigned copy of this Informed Consent Form to keep in my possession.

Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number where you can be reached: \_\_\_\_\_

Best days and times to reach you: \_\_\_\_\_

I certify that I have explained to the above individual the nature and purpose, the potential benefits, and possible risks associated with participating in this research study. I have answered any questions that have been raised, and have witnessed the above signature.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Investigator's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## Student Informed Consent

### Working title: **Film in composition: Developing critical thinking skills through the study of film in first-year composition courses**

You are invited to participate in a research study. The following information is provided in order to help you make an informed decision whether or not to participate. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

The significance of this research is to assist writing teachers in understanding how the application of film study helps develop student critical thinking skills that are essential to academic writing. Participation in this study will involve granting me permission to collect your writing (one to two papers) from your professor. It will also involve completing a brief online survey (about five to ten questions) on the effectiveness of film study to first-year composition. There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this research.

Student participants must be at least eighteen years old to contribute to the study. Your participation in this research is voluntary and will not affect any evaluation of your course performance. If you choose to participate, all information, including your identity, will be held in strict confidence. You may withdraw from the study at any time by notifying me at the e-mail address or phone number listed below. Upon your request to withdraw, all information pertaining to you will be destroyed.

It should be noted that all information will only be used for research purposes and has no bearing on your standing at this college or university. Student writing and survey comments will be helpful to teachers who are interested in the study of film in first-year composition. As a part of the dissertation study, I may quote from student writing and/or survey comments to discuss the implications of integrating film in the writing classroom. The information obtained in the study may be published in a composition journal and/or presented at a composition conference.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign the statement below.

#### **Researcher:**

Beatriz Amaya-Anderson, Ph.D. Candidate  
Indiana University of Pennsylvania  
English Department, 110 Leonard Hall  
Indiana, PA 15705  
909-593-3511, x4361  
banderson@ulv.edu

#### **Project Director:**

Dr. Bennett A. Rafoth  
Indiana University of Pennsylvania  
English Department, 110 Leonard Hall  
Indiana, PA 15705  
724-357-3029  
brafoth@iup.edu

*This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (Phone: 724-357-7730).*

Student Informed Consent (Continued)

VOLUNTARY CONSENT FORM:

I have read and understand the information on the form and I consent to volunteer to be a subject in this study. I understand that my teacher interview and/or classroom observation is/are completely confidential and that I have the right to withdraw at any time. I have received an unsigned copy of this Informed Consent Form to keep in my possession.

Name (*please print*): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number where you can be reached: \_\_\_\_\_

Best days and times to reach you: \_\_\_\_\_

I certify that I have explained to the above individual the nature and purpose, the potential benefits, and possible risks associated with participating in this research study. I have answered any questions that have been raised, and have witnessed the above signature.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Investigator's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

### Case Report Consent Form

The following is a case report of the research site and classroom observation conducted in Spring or Fall 2006 for *Film in composition: Developing critical thinking skills through the study of film in first-year composition*. This report is a document grounded in the data gathered during the study (e.g., interview and observation field notes, course syllabi, handouts, etc.) as well as the research gathered from the school web site (e.g., college description, student population, department information, course offerings, etc.).

As a participant in the study, you are invited to review this document by adding, deleting, or otherwise modifying the content until it presents an accurate picture of the substance of the research site and the classroom proceedings. If you believe this document accurately presents both, please sign the statement below.

*This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (Phone: 724-357-7730).*

For the Participant:

I have read and understand the information on this form, and I believe the case report accurately presents the research site and the classroom proceedings conducted for the aforementioned study. I have received an unsigned copy of this Case Report Consent Form to keep in my possession.

Name (*please print*): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number where you can be reached: \_\_\_\_\_

Best days and times to reach you: \_\_\_\_\_

For the Researcher:

I certify that I have explained to the above individual the nature of this consent form and the purpose of the case report in the study. I have answered any questions that have been raised, and have witnessed the above signature.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Investigator's signature: \_\_\_\_\_



## APPENDIX C - INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### *Introduction*

For the most part, IRB approved teacher interviews were conducted as semistructured conversations. These conversations focused on the participants' teaching experience, educational background, composition courses, and film-writing assignments. They also considered the student populations the participants have instructed. Below are the sample questions that were covered during our conversations. Generally speaking, each interview took about an hour to complete.

### I. Before the Interview:

- Opening the Conversation:
  - How has the beginning of the semester been?
- On the Dissertation Project:
  - Introduce Myself and the Project (If necessary)
  - Official Business: Let the participant know that:
    - I will keep notes during the interview.
    - He/she will have the opportunity to review and edit the official interview transcript.
  - Explain Participation Involvement: All participation is voluntary.
    - The initial meeting: An informal meeting where I get to know the participants and learn about their teaching practices, learning philosophies, and critical frameworks for first-year writing courses.
    - An official interview: After I have received IRB approval, I will ask the participants to discuss previous material and more in an audio-recorded conversation.
    - An observation: These observations help me see what happens in the classroom – to see the teaching practice with students.
    - Follow-up interview/conversations: After the observation (or later), I have brief conversations with the participant regarding the class meeting and interview and observation transcripts.

### II. Educational and Teaching Background:

- For Myself: Check the college or university website to find out if information regarding the participant is available so that I can make changes to my questions if needed.
- Educational Background:
  - Where did you get your final degree?
  - How many courses of comp theory have you had? If you haven't had a formal education in this area, what kind of self-preparation did you do?
  - Do you have an educational background in film studies? If so, how many courses did you take? If not, what kind of self-preparation did you do?

- Teaching Background:
  - How long have you been teaching composition?
  - How many writing courses do you teach every semester?
  - Have you mentored or collaborated with other faculty members regarding your teaching practices?
  - Have you published your teaching practices?
  - How long have you been including film in your writing courses? Can you tell me why you decided to start using film in your writing courses?

### III. Teaching Philosophy:

- What is your teaching philosophy?
- Are there particular composition theorists with which you would identify your practice?
- How does your teaching philosophy and pedagogy translate into teaching objectives and working with the student in your classes?
- What are your teaching objectives?
- What would your ideal composition course look like?
- How does the study of film fit into this ideal composition course?

### IV. The Students:

- How many students are in your writing courses?
- Please describe the students in your courses.
  - Are they basic writers? First-year-composition writers? Advanced composition writers?
  - How prepared are they for academic writing?
    - Do you require your students to get tutoring throughout the semester?
    - How many times do you hold writing conferences with your students?
  - On Writing and Reading:
    - What kind of writing tasks do you assign in your writing courses?
    - How many writing tasks do you assign in your writing courses?
    - What kind of reading do your students complete during the semester?
- Student Responses to Film:
  - How would you define film literacy?
  - What kind of film literacy do your students come into the classroom with? What film literacy do you think they lack?
  - How do your students respond to the inclusion of film study in the writing classroom?
  - Have your students critical thinking improved since using film in your composition courses?
  - Have you seen a difference in the kind of writing your students submit in your courses since you have started including film in composition?

#### V. Composition at the College or University:

- Tell me about the English, the Language Arts, or the writing program at your college or university.
  - What is its mission concerning writing?
    - Who primarily teaches writing courses at this college or university?
  - What are your program's composition courses like?
    - What is characteristic of your writing courses? How many writing tasks are generally assigned? Five papers? Seven papers?
    - Do the students have an opportunity to select the teacher or thematic focus of the course they want to take from the schedule of classes?
    - What composition courses do you teach at this college or university?
  - Is your inclusion of film in college composition welcomed?
    - How many teachers include film in their composition courses?

#### VI. The Participant's Writing Courses:

- Tell me about your writing course(s).
  - Do all of these classes include film study? Why? Why not?
  - What was your reason for bringing film and composition together? Why have you included film study as a part of your writing course(s)? Why not television or art? What do you see as the advantages of having film in a composition course?
- Critical Framework to Prepare Students for Film:
  - What approach do you take to film in your writing courses? Why?
  - Including film study in the writing classroom is inherently interdisciplinary. What theoretical perspectives make up an assignment that includes film study?
  - Are there particular theorists that you subscribe to that inform your pedagogical practices in the film-comp classroom? Why?
  - What readings do you pair up with film selections?
    - Aside: Is there a particular textbook that you work from? How did you come across this textbook?
- Practical Application:
  - How many movies do you show or include as a part of your syllabus?
  - Do you show entire films or film clips?
  - How do you manage film? Is it homework that students must watch on their own time? Or is it an activity students watch together as a community?

- Film Choices:
  - Which films (or themes) have been especially successful? Can you tell me why that was so?
  - What kind of success have you had with these assignments? What missteps?
- A Particular Assignment on Film:
  - How does the film-study assignment fit into the overall writing course? Does the assignment come early in the semester?
  - What assignment comes before and after this film assignment? What steps do you take to prepare the students for this unit?
  - Do you present film discourse to your students?
    - How much do you present to your students? Where have you streamlined the information for your students?
    - If you do not present film discourse in your writing courses, why have you decided to exclude this information?
  - Do you have any handouts that I could take with me regarding your assignment? Can you tell me about this assignment?
- The Implications:
  - What are the implications of bringing film into composition?

#### VII. Concerning Chapter Two / Applications of Film Study:

- My dissertation proposal identifies four analytical frameworks teachers apply alongside a unit including film study:
  - Narrative Analysis
  - Cultural Analysis
  - Cinematic Analysis
  - Rhetorical Analysis

Which critical frameworks are important to your practice?

#### VIII. After the Interview:

- Is there any thing else you would like to say about film in composition?
- Would you agree to have an official interview with me? Would you mind if I observed your class?
- Do you have colleagues who would be willing to speak to me about the inclusion of film in their writing courses?

## APPENDIX D - FILM IN COMPOSITION: THE PARTICIPANTS~+\*\*

| Participant           | Educational Background                                                    | Teaching Experience | Pedagogical Goals                                                                                                                                                                         | Critical Frameworks | Teaching and Learning Philosophy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Rationale for Using Film in Composition                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Reading and Film Selections                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Karen Baird           | B.A. Literature; Screenwriting Certificate; M.A. Composition and Rhetoric | 5 Years             | To focus on the writing process. To mine the text for theme(s). To understand film's representation of ideology. To understand textual construction.                                      | NA, CUA, CIA, RA    | Subscribes to the writing process. Begins with student knowledge and experience (through film) and moves to written texts. Preparing students for academic writing.                                                                                              | To foster student confidence in analyzing texts. To delve into the film representation of ideology through cinematic technique. To present different ways of seeing. To apply terms and concepts to other texts. To explore why some literary moments are filmic and others are not. To articulate intuitive knowledge of images. | Excerpt from The Poetics, "Theory of Tragedy," <i>Psycho</i> , <i>Mystic River</i> ; The Concept of the Hero, <i>Braveheart</i> . Film clips from sports movies and documentaries; <i>Bleachers</i> , <i>Million Dollar Baby</i> , and <i>Miracle on St. Anthony's</i> (novel and film). |
| Clara Bautista**      | B.A. Literature and Language; M.A. Literature and TESOL                   | 7 Years             | To prepare students for academic writing. To teach close readings and multiple interpretations. To discuss social-cultural issues.                                                        | NA, CUA, RA         | Believes students rise top when teacher expectations are high. Begins with student knowledge and experience (through film). Aims at building learning communities in the classroom. Preparing students for the academic essay.                                   | To see what students can do with the film and written text. To have students extract meaning and think critically about film and other texts. To have students focus on themes, symbolism, and character analysis.                                                                                                                | "Three Kinds of Oppression," <i>Iron-Jawed Angels</i> , "Why Marriages Fail," "Vows," <i>Notting Hill</i> ; "Gender Role Behaviors and Attitudes," "What Kind of King," "Thank Heaven, For Little Boys," "Women Are Just Better," <i>Normal</i> .                                        |
| Dr. Madeline Bowman** | M.A. Literature; M.S. Film Education; M.F.A. Cinema; Ph.D. Communications | 45 Years            | To help students gain awareness of the world. To teach students how to communicate and articulate their ideas through speaking and writing. To focus on social-cultural issue of the day. | NA, CUA, RA         | Wants to enlarge student sense of self and the world so that ultimately they can be agents of change. Helps students to be critics of what they have seen, heard, and read. Works to build learning communities in her classroom. Focuses on the academic essay. | To tap into student knowledge and experience. To have students reflect on their relationship with film and how it affects them. To articulate the purpose and approach of film so that students can transfer this skill to the written text.                                                                                      | Reading selections from <i>Creating America</i> : "Identities," "Images of Gender and Family," "American Dreams," "Justice and Civil Liberties," "In the Land of the Free," "A Tapestry of Hope," <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> , <i>Mi Familia</i> , <i>Bowling for Columbine</i> .      |

## APPENDIX D - FILM IN COMPOSITION: THE PARTICIPANTS~+\*\*

| Participant              | Educational Background                                                                       | Teaching Experience | Pedagogical Goals                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Critical Frameworks | Teaching and Learning Philosophy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Rationale for Using Film in Composition                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Reading and Film Selections                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Dr. Anne Bratton-Hayes** | B.A. Literature; M.A. Literature and Creative Writing; Ph.D. Creative Writing and Literature | 21 Years            | To teach students to be better critical thinkers so that they become better writers. To foster student learning through smaller tasks that build to larger tasks. To get students to access the text. To help students make the transition from what questions to how and why questions. To explore the relationship between images, words, and sound. To understand composition in a broad sense. To help students think rhetorically about the text. | CIA, RA             | Wants her students to access the text and practice textual analysis. Draws on student knowledge and experience through film. Teaches convention and rhetorical modes but is a believer in developing invention strategies and student voice. Wants to students to think critically about media they enjoy on a regular basis. | To engage students as active learners. To explore interesting film structures. To understand the role of audience in watching films. To consider the ethics of viewing film (pleasures and censorship). To foster active, critical viewing. To help students make the transition from what questions to <i>how</i> and <i>why</i> questions.                                                                                                                          | Reading selections from Beyond Words: "Moving Pictures: Writing to Tell Stories," "Film Stories of the Twentieth Century." "Last Laugh: Was Hitchcock's Masterpiece a Private Joke?" "Hitchcock's Use of Profiles in Vertigo." <i>Psycho</i> , <i>Strangers on a Train</i> , <i>Rope</i> , <i>Vertigo</i> , <i>Marnie</i> , <i>North By Northwest</i> , <i>The Village</i> .                       |
| Dr. William Cressman     | M.A. Composition and Rhetoric; Ph.D. Modern Studies                                          | 18 Years            | To facilitate student learning through popular culture texts. To help students become better critical thinkers so that they become better critical writers. To create dialogue and multiple ways of seeing. To question how texts come to stand for certain positions. To create dialogue. To develop critical reading strategies.                                                                                                                     | CUA, CIA, RA        | Sees himself as facilitator in the classroom. Works with popular culture text to facilitate new ways of seeing (Yancey Influenced). Draws on student knowledge and experience. Presents his own experiences as a composition student.                                                                                         | To facilitate new ways of seeing. To draw on student knowledge and experience. To have students reflect on their relationship with film and how it affects them. To delve into the film representation and how images come to stand for argument. To bring students interest in the classroom ("experts"). To expose students to unconventional material and methods of storytelling. To show how images are manipulated or constructed (film stocks, framing, etc.). | John Berger's "Ways of Seeing." Scout McCloud's "Show and Tell." <i>Run, Lola, Run</i> ; <i>War Photographer</i> ; <i>The Merchants of Cool</i> ; <i>Delusions of Modern Primitivism</i> . "Generation (Fill in the Blank)," "Coming of Age, Seeking Identity," "What High School Is," "Let Teenagers Try Adulthood," Crossing Boundaries," <i>Dazed and Confused</i> , <i>Stand and Deliver</i> . |

## APPENDIX D - FILM IN COMPOSITION: THE PARTICIPANTS~+\*\*

| Participant          | Educational Background                                                                                   | Teaching Experience | Pedagogical Goals                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Critical Frameworks | Teaching and Learning Philosophy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Rationale for Using Film in Composition                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Reading and Film Selections                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Emma Fields          | B.A. Literature and Teacher Education Credential Program; Certification, Language Arts; M.A., Literature | 18 Years            | To hone critical thinking and writing skills. To help students mine the text for meaning. To broaden student understanding of the world. To teach rhetorical modes and fallacies.                                                                                                                                                                                                           | NA, CUA, CIA, RA    | Wants to see growth in her students' critical thinking and writing skills. Focuses on academic writing. Subscribes to the writing process. Implements teacher and peer modeling. Establishes learning communities in her classroom so that students learn in social context.                                                                                                                     | To teach students terms and concepts. To start classroom discussions. To build cultural literacy. To help students understand rhetorical modes or rhetorical structure. To use film as a scaffold for classroom conversation and student writing. To facilitate the bridge between visual and written texts.                                                                                               | Movie Reviews on <i>American History X</i> and <i>Do the Right Thing</i> and the films. <i>Malcolm X</i> , <i>In the Line of Fire</i> , <i>A Few Good Men</i> . King's "Why We Crave Horror Movies," <i>The Blair Witch Project</i> .            |
| Dr. Eric Fischer**   | B.A. Radio and Television; M.F.A. Creative Writing; Ph.D. Linguistics, Literacy, and Rhetoric            | 19 Years            | To help students find their place in the college classroom (Health influenced). To counter the negative responses students have towards reading and writing. To hone student critical thinking skills so that they become critical writers. To encourage student invention and expression. To teach convention through a variety of texts. To encourage a community of readers and writers. | NA, CUA, CIA, RA    | Helps students move from working-class literacy to academic literacy. Works from student knowledge and experience to foster adult literacy. Builds on student responses to generate classroom dialogues. Takes a social interpersonal approach to textual analysis. Works with the process. Creates the existential experience of the characters and couples this with a genre approach to film. | To help students make connections between home and school cultures. To encourage close readings of the text. To foster adult literacy and critical thinking skills. To present film as interpretation of the written text. To foster student understanding regarding their relationship with film culture (Giroux & Aronowitz).                                                                            | Reading selections from The St. Martin's Guide to Writing: "On Being a Real Westerner," "Love: The Right Chemistry." 1984 (novel and film). <i>All the Pretty Horses</i> (novel and film), <i>The Wild Bunch</i> , <i>Brokeback Mountain</i> .   |
| Dr. Theresa Hamilton | B.A. Literature and Journalism; Ph.D. Mythological Studies                                               | 5 Years             | To hone reading and writing skills. To teach multiple points of view. To explore reading material in order to write about it. To teach students argument.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | NA, CUA, RA         | Works at honoring student cultural backgrounds, families, and neighborhoods. Welcomes different voices, interpretations, and ways of forming and structuring arguments.                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | To demystify the act of writing and reading. To introduce a new voice into the classroom. To present film as interpretation of the written text. To teach from a literary perspective. To work with student knowledge and experience with film and television. To understand how genre affects how information is communicated. To note the similarities and differences between visual and written texts. | <i>Like Water for Chocolate</i> (novel and film). Campbell's Hero Mythology paired with <i>Spirited Away</i> , <i>Groundhog Day</i> , <i>The Family Man</i> . <i>Plagues and Pleasures of the Salton Sea</i> and <i>The Book of Dead Birds</i> . |

## APPENDIX D - FILM IN COMPOSITION: THE PARTICIPANTS~+\*\*

| Participant     | Educational Background                                                                            | Teaching Experience | Pedagogical Goals                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Critical Frameworks | Teaching and Learning Philosophy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Rationale for Using Film in Composition                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Reading and Film Selections                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hugh Kava       | B.A. Literature; M.A. Literature                                                                  | 9 Years             | To hone critical thinking skill. To teach close readings. To think critically about writing and argument.                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | NA, CUA, RA         | Wants to establish learning communities in his classroom. Wants his students to be active learners.                                                                                                                                                                                                            | To explore cultural and ideological issues. To help students with critical thinking. To make connections between texts.                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <i>Swingers</i> . "Hunger as Ideology." "Ways of Seeing." <i>The Thomas Crown Affair</i> . An Excerpt from <i>Hitchcock Films</i> , An Excerpt from <i>The James Bond Man: The Films of Sean Connery</i> , <i>Marnie</i> . |
| Dr. Grace Leigh | B.A. Anthropology; M.A. Museology; M.A. Literature and Composition and Rhetoric; Ph.D. Literature | 10 Years            | To enable her students to compete and cope with other classes. To teach all of her students academic writing across the disciplines. To mine the text for meaning and argument. To understand broaden student horizon and understandings of the world. To help students understand local, national, and cultural environments. | NA, CUA, CIA, RA    | Works from student knowledge and experience. Wants her students to make the transition from their home language and expression toward academic argument. Facilitating textual analysis through learning communities.                                                                                           | To facilitate new ways of seeing the text. To develop student critical thinking skills. To think academically about the meaning of the film text (especially the comedy genre). To present ideological concepts to understand and analyze the text.                                                                               | <i>Rumble Fish</i> (film and novel). <i>Harold and Kumar Go to White Castle, Fridays, Half Baked, Fight Club</i> .                                                                                                         |
| Joline Newton   | B.A. Literature; M.A. Rhetoric and Composition                                                    | 4 Years             | To balance needs: working with student knowledge and experience and providing students the tools needed to become better critical thinkers and writers. To foster the idea that writing is a life-learning skill. To encourage multiple interpretations and readings. To teach students to uncover language biases.            | CUA, RA             | Takes a social-epistemic approach. Works from student knowledge but also wants to broaden their experiences. Sees herself as a guide, a facilitator. Applies a student-centered approach to classroom instruction where students take on assignments on their own and present this material to other students. | To draw from student knowledge and experience. To foster student understanding of visual rhetoric (from the still image to the moving image) and understand how its devices and strategies are particularly effective in communicating ideas. "It is the medium that speaks to everyone. It is a powerful form of argumentation." | Reading selections from <i>Aims of Argument</i> : "The Appeals of Persuasion in Visual Arguments," <i>Fahrenheit 9/11</i> .                                                                                                |



## APPENDIX D - FILM IN COMPOSITION: THE PARTICIPANTS~+\*\*

| Participant         | Educational Background                                                                     | Teaching Experience | Pedagogical Goals                                                                                                          | Critical Frameworks | Teaching and Learning Philosophy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Rationale for Using Film in Composition                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Reading and Film Selections                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Dr. Janice Robinson | B.A., M.A., Ph.D. Literature                                                               | 7 Years             | To broaden student understanding of the world. To teach students critical literacy.                                        | NA, CUA, RA         | "My job as a teacher is to reduce. There is no reason a teacher can't get to know her students when there are only twenty-five students in the class."                                                                                                                                                                    | To foster the skills students already have. To honor different kinds of learning and ways of knowing. To prepare for critical viewing. To work with student experience with film (students responsive). To broaden student understanding of the world. To teach students critical literacy.                                                                     | Who are we?: <i>The Preamble to the Constitution</i> ("We the people..."), <i>The Declaration of Independence</i> . Short Stories and Letters by James Fenimore Cooper, <i>The Last of the Mohicans</i> . Excerpts from <i>The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass</i> , <i>The Shawshank Redemption</i> .                              |
| Alyson Sanford      | B.A., M.A. Literature                                                                      | 19 Years            | To help students with reading and writing. To help students respond critically to the text.                                | NA, CUA, RA         | Melds the teaching goals presented by the college and writing course with student abilities and talents.                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | To prepare critical readers and viewers. To include a text students are familiar with and are receptive to. To make the familiar (film) unfamiliar. To show the common elements between film and print.                                                                                                                                                         | <i>Smoke Signals</i> . An Analytical Framework of <i>The Hero with a Thousand Faces</i> , <i>The Lion King</i> , <i>The Fischer King</i> , <i>The Color Purple</i> .                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Kathleen Tedrow     | B.A. Literature; M.A. Composition and Rhetoric; A.B.D. Language, Literacy, and Composition | 8 Years             | To understand how texts work. To learn how language works. To know the role of the reader in making the text have meaning. | NA, CUA, CIA, RA    | Applies scaffolding, the importance of providing an early scaffold for people but also being able to take the scaffold away so that it becomes less relevant or the importance of teaching people to build their own scaffolds. Works with film as a part of this scaffolding process (student knowledge and experience). | To improve critical thinking skills. To get students to think about character and, especially, thematic analyses. To work with a medium students think well of. To scaffold student learning. To use film as a tool but also an object of study. To work with student knowledge and experience. To make unfamiliar the familiar. To understand intertextuality. | "On the Uses of a Liberal Education," "What Does a Woman Need to Know," "Feeding the Ancestors," "America Skips School," "In Defense of Elitism," "When Bright Girls Decide That Math is 'A Waste of Time,'" <i>Lean on Me</i> , <i>The Emperor's Club</i> , <i>Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price</i> , <i>Is Wal-Mart Good for America?</i> |

## APPENDIX D - FILM IN COMPOSITION: THE PARTICIPANTS~+\*\*

| Participant       | Educational Background                                                                                 | Teaching Experience | Pedagogical Goals                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Critical Frameworks | Teaching and Learning Philosophy                                                                                                                                                     | Rationale for Using Film in Composition                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Reading and Film Selections                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Dr. Daniel Weaver | B.A. Religious Studies; M.A. English and Cinema; Ph.D. Interdisciplinary Approaches to Intertextuality | 24 Years            | To teach invention and convention. To sharpen critical thinking and writing skills.                                                                                                                               | NA, CUA, CIA, RA    | Believes in a student-centered approach. Includes film study to foster student critical thinking skills.                                                                             | To 'read' film and discuss its themes and characters in class.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | "In a Grove," <i>Rashomon</i> . "The Swimmer" and <i>The Swimmer</i> . <i>Throw Mama from the Train</i> . <i>Killing Us Softly</i> , "A Work of Artiface," "Barbie Doll." <i>Heart of Darkness</i> (novella and film), <i>Apocalypse Now</i> . <i>The Merchants of Cool</i> . |
| Matthew Wheeler   | B.A., M.A. Literature                                                                                  | 4 Years             | To develop critical thinking skills so that students become critical writers. To acknowledge different subject positions. To think in larger ways (from self to the world). To delve into social-cultural issues. | NA, CUA, RA         | Wants his students to be critical of the written and the visual text. Works from student knowledge and experience to build critical thinking skills when working with written texts. | To foster student learning by presenting a variety of texts. To include film study to honor a social practice that students are familiar with. To make film unfamiliar. To group ideas, motifs, themes, etc. To work with texts students are receptive to. To think thematically, culturally, and rhetorically about the text. | "Racism and Oppression," <i>Crash</i> . <i>Bowling for Columbine</i> . <i>Barraka</i> .                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Stuart Yau        | B.A. Literature and Writing; M.F.A. Creative Writing                                                   | 11 Years            | To improve critical thinking skills. To broaden student understanding of the world. To understand textual construction.                                                                                           | NA, CUA, RA         | Moves away from traditional teaching methods. Builds learning communities. Wants his students to be active learners.                                                                 | To identify themes and issues across texts and media. Film study is especially useful in teasing out ideas from written texts like <i>1984</i> , <i>God's Politics</i> , and <i>Amazing Grace</i> .                                                                                                                            | <i>God's Politics</i> , <i>Amazing Grace</i> , <i>1984</i> , <i>The Village</i> , <i>Good Night</i> , and <i>Good Luck</i> .                                                                                                                                                  |

~Each participant has received a pseudonym.

+ Each of the participants teaches at one or more two-year colleges.

\*\*These participants are cases featured in the study.

## APPENDIX E - STUDENT SURVEY QUESTIONS

### *Introduction*

The following instrument was completed by the writing students who participated in the study. For three of the four cases, I conducted student surveys in class. I distributed and collected the survey myself. The instrument took roughly fifteen minutes to complete. For the final case, I sent an electronic mail version of the survey. Students responded directly to my private e-mail account.

### Student Survey

Hello! Earlier this term, I spoke to you about participation in my study, *Film in Composition: Developing Critical Thinking Skills through the Study of Film in First-Year Composition Courses*. Below is a brief survey that asks for your thoughts on the use of film in composition. Respond to each question as best as you can and return your responses to me when you have finished.

On a final note, I'd like to thank you for your participation. It's been a pleasure visiting your class. Your thoughts on film in writing instruction are valuable and appreciated. Good luck to you and take care!

Beatriz Amaya-Anderson

### Questions:

1. Aside from fitting into your course schedule or being a course requirement, what was the reason you chose this particular course section of composition?
2. What role did film play in this course?
3. Did you find this course more enjoyable because it included film? Briefly explain.

4. How did the film selections complement the course material (e.g., the readings) or the theme of the course?
5. Have you received instruction in viewing films as a part of your high school English or college English courses?
  - a. If yes, briefly describe your experience.
  - b. If no, in what ways has the instruction in this composition course extended your knowledge of film and film viewing?
6. How has the inclusion of film been particularly effective in this course?
7. In your opinion, what are the possible drawbacks of including film in composition?

# APPENDIX F – CASE #1 - STUDENT SURVEYS (Students 1 through 5)

| Questions                                                                                                                                                                          | Student 1                                                                         | Student 2                                                                                        | Student 3                                                   | Student 4                                                                                                          | Student 5                                                                                                                      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Aside from fitting into your course schedule or being a course requirement, what was your rationale for choosing this particular writing course section of first-year composition? | My major is journalism and anything that involves writing interests me very much. | I wanted to improve my writing skills. I also wanted to learn how to write better papers.        | Wanted to improve English skills.                           | I wanted to perfect my writing.                                                                                    | I ended up in this class only because I needed it as a requirement.                                                            |
| What role did film play in this course?                                                                                                                                            | Film was used as an example of each reading to help better understand.            | It helped for a visual aspect, sometimes just reading something you get the whole picture.       | A big one. We had essays based on them.                     | A big role. I felt like I was able to write my essays with a lot more ease.                                        | A great role, because it's better than just reading essay after essay. By watching movies I think I get more out of the class. |
| Did you find this course more enjoyable because it included film? Briefly explain.                                                                                                 | Yes, readings are easier to understand with films.                                | Yes, it wasn't the same old read and write approach.                                             | Yes, the films were very helpful with the essay selections. | So much more. For one, who doesn't like watching films. Two, it makes the class more enjoyable.                    | Yes, we weren't just confined to learning the same old thing like in other English classes than I've taken.                    |
| How did the film selections complement the course material or the theme of the course?                                                                                             | [-]                                                                               | The film supplied evidence of material from our reading. We were able to see material in action. | [-]                                                         | We watched movies on the topics. We would have read about regardlessly. Once again, made the class more enjoyable. | They complemented them very well.                                                                                              |
| Have you received instruction in viewing films as a part of your high school English or college English courses?                                                                   | No.                                                                               | No.                                                                                              | No.                                                         | Yes.                                                                                                               | No.                                                                                                                            |
| If yes, briefly describe your experience.                                                                                                                                          | [-]                                                                               | [-]                                                                                              | [-]                                                         | I was told to take notes on the film.                                                                              | [-]                                                                                                                            |

# APPENDIX F – CASE #1 - STUDENT SURVEYS (Students 1 through 5)

| Questions                                                                                                            | Student 1                                                                                                                                                                     | Student 2                                                                                                                                          | Student 3                                                                             | Student 4                                                                                             | Student 5                                                                                                                             |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| If no, in what ways has this instruction in first-year composition extended your knowledge of film and film viewing? | No, but its something I'm looking into. It has taught me to look further into the story, to make predictions, and to relate to it, and handle similar situations differently. | It has made me more aware on what to look for in a film. To examine it as a whole.                                                                 | They taught me to look deeper into the movies.                                        | [-]                                                                                                   | It's extended it a lot, because you always think that class will be boring but when you get to do more than read dumb essays its fun. |
| How has the inclusion of film been particularly effective in this course?                                            | It has been effective in the sense that it lets you really get into the story and the things you get out of it aren't just things you will forget the next day.               | Visuals always help.                                                                                                                               | It has [been] very effective. Some essays could have not been written without [them]. | Makes me want to come to class more. I know or it feels like there's less work in the course overall. | It was effective because, English should be about writing on exciting things rather than just research papers.                        |
| In your opinion, what are the possible drawbacks of including film in writing instruction?                           | [-]                                                                                                                                                                           | If you get lost or sidetracked, the movie keeps going. Basically understanding of the movie, you can't just stop it while everyone is watching it. | [-]                                                                                   | None.                                                                                                 | I don't think that there are any.                                                                                                     |

# APPENDIX F – CASE #1 - STUDENT SURVEYS (Students 6 through 10)

| Questions                                                                                                                                                                          | Student 6                                                                              | Student 7                                                                                                                                                            | Student 8                                                                                                               | Student 9                                                                                                                                                 | Student 10                                                                                                                                   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Aside from fitting into your course schedule or being a course requirement, what was your rationale for choosing this particular writing course section of first-year composition? | A different type of class in which you get to open up more.                            | To enhance my writing skills.                                                                                                                                        | To improve my writing skills. English is not my best subject. I really have trouble understanding the rules of writing. | Because I want to increase my writing skills into something bigger and better. I want to be able to write about any topic and not have a problem with it. | I've had [Clara] as a previous English instructor and I thought it would be much easier and more understandable taking this course with her. |
| What role did film play in this course?                                                                                                                                            | I think that the films give you the visual of every story we read.                     | Films played a large role in this course as three of our papers were on the films we watched.                                                                        | To provide evidence in the essay and have a base.                                                                       | A very good one. It helps understand more about what we will be writing about than to read about it.                                                      | Films in this course were played for the purpose of writing papers and to see how we interpret them.                                         |
| Did you find this course more enjoyable because it included film? Briefly explain.                                                                                                 | Yes, because a film gives you more detail than reading.                                | I found it enjoyable only because we [were] watching a film in class rather than sitting through a lecture. I'd prefer to write on better topics than relationships. | I really don't care if this course had film but it did make it enjoyable.                                               | Yes, because by reading something you don't get the chance to understand it more than when it's put into a film.                                          | Oh yes very much! The films served as a visual aid which helped me a lot.                                                                    |
| How did the film selections complement the course material or the theme of the course?                                                                                             | The film relates to the readings. Also at times there are comparisons between the two. | The film selection is good but I did not see a clear cut relation to the course material other than having to write on it.                                           | It did because it related [to] what the essay were going to be.                                                         | The course is not completely over yet.                                                                                                                    | To help us gather information from any source to write effective and well organized essays.                                                  |
| Have you received instruction in viewing films as a part of your high school English or college English courses?                                                                   | No.                                                                                    | No.                                                                                                                                                                  | Yes.                                                                                                                    | No, I have not.                                                                                                                                           | No.                                                                                                                                          |

# **APPENDIX F – CASE #1 - STUDENT SURVEYS (Students 6 through 10)**

| Questions                                                                                                            | Student 6                                                                                                                                                                                               | Student 7                                                                                                                                         | Student 8                                                                                         | Student 9                                             | Student 10                                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| If yes, briefly describe your experience.                                                                            | [-]                                                                                                                                                                                                     | [-]                                                                                                                                               | I did have some instructor on viewing films but [it] was not a big deal.                          | [-]                                                   | [-]                                                                                                                                 |
| If no, in what ways has this instruction in first-year composition extended your knowledge of film and film viewing? | The instructor extended my knowledge in the sen[s]e of being more alert with each scene.                                                                                                                | It has taught me to observe the characters more closely and find their reasoning behind their action.                                             | [-]                                                                                               | It has extended it to a better way in viewing things. | In critical thinking and taking them apart for a better understanding.                                                              |
| How has the inclusion of film been particularly effective in this course?                                            | The film makes you understand more and able to get more information for a[n] essay.                                                                                                                     | It has to prove a point.                                                                                                                          | It was a base for the essay we wrote.                                                             | [-]                                                   | To relate the films with our readings. To gather examples and evidence and connect them with our readings.                          |
| In your opinion, what are the possible drawbacks of including film in writing instruction?                           | I think that many of the times the instruct[or] doesn't include films in the [class] because of the time they might have. The film has to relate to the subject that is being discussed in the reading. | The only drawback I can see is the topic. "One size doesn't fit all." I found marriage and relationship topic pretty boring to write and discuss. | I really don't think there are drawbacks because I got more information and support for my essay. | [-]                                                   | Students might forget to take notes and focus more on enjoying the films. Sometimes the films shown in class are difficult to find. |



# APPENDIX F – CASE #1 - STUDENT SURVEYS (Students 11 through 14)

| Questions                                                                                                                                                                          | Student 11                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Student 12                                                                                                                                                 | Student 13                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Student 14                                                                                                                                                                               |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Aside from fitting into your course schedule or being a course requirement, what was your rationale for choosing this particular writing course section of first-year composition? | The only reason I chose it was, that the teacher scheduled for this class was also an English honors teacher, however the[re] were [...] schedule changes done by [the college], but the experience with Ms. [Bautista] has been good. | English is my favorite subject. I would have taken this class my first semester [...] if it wasn't full. I can't wait for [advanced freshman composition]. | I chose to take this particular course, because I wanted to know more about the correct way to write an essay. I especially wanted to find out how to write a good conclusion.                                                                                                                                                           | [Retaking the course because of a failed grade.]                                                                                                                                         |
| What role did film play in this course?                                                                                                                                            | I am a fanatic of films, so [if] we are doing reports on film, I am all for it. The films displayed were selected with care.                                                                                                           | We are supposed to anal[y]ze the movies as a piece of literature.                                                                                          | It helped us focus on our base readings. In the first essay, we did, it was based on <i>Iron-Jawed Angels</i> . We concentrated on the movie, and related it to the Martin Luther King speech. In the second essay, the movie <i>Notting Hill</i> was not as important, since we were given a choice between the movie and "Vows" [...]. | Film is important to see because it just not a movie. It is an enlightenment for the mind and to start to think about situations in life sometimes. You connect and sometimes you don't. |
| Did you find this course more enjoyable because it included film? Briefly explain.                                                                                                 | Yes I did. Most classes make the student choose a topic then, the student needs to do research. It is a colorless, boring experience. However, film is a good choice for this course.                                                  | Yes! The films break up the monotony of the class. It adds a different element. Also, the movie choices have been great.                                   | The film selections helped us understand the readings more.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | I did enjoy much more [...] [I]t prove[d] itself to be a good english class.                                                                                                             |

# APPENDIX F – CASE #1 - STUDENT SURVEYS (Students 11 through 14)

| Questions                                                                                                            | Student 11                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Student 12                                                                                                                         | Student 13                                                                                                                                                                                    | Student 14                                                                                                                                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| How did the film selections complement the course material or the theme of the course?                               | There were probably handpicked by Ms. [Bautista]. They fit right into the class readings and discussions. I liked the way Martin Luther King's "Three Types of Resistance to Oppression" fits perfectly into the film Iron-Jawed Angels. | The films seem very fitting to appropriate for the subject matter.                                                                 | I have had science classes where they would show us documentaries, and they would make us take notes. And English classes where they showed us classic literature that been turned into film. | The power of film [h]as on people.                                                                                                                            |
| Have you received instruction in viewing films as a part of your high school English or college English courses?     | No, I have not, but I have learned on my own I have a giant DVD collection.                                                                                                                                                              | No.                                                                                                                                | [-]                                                                                                                                                                                           | Last semester, I took [a] literature class but it was much more than that [...] Film helped me out to understand movies more.                                 |
| If yes, briefly describe your experience.                                                                            | [-]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | [-]                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                               | [Handwriting is indecipherable.]                                                                                                                              |
| If no, in what ways has this instruction in first-year composition extended your knowledge of film and film viewing? | The course has not taught me anything new about film viewing.                                                                                                                                                                            | I find myself looking at the deeper meaning of the actions in the film as opposed to taking everything at face value.              | [-]                                                                                                                                                                                           | Again, movies and their themes are important if they have values [...] for everyone and movies have all things and can help change many [lives].              |
| How has the inclusion of film been particularly effective in this course?                                            | It has been very effective since the films chosen were so closely related to the class topics.                                                                                                                                           | The class as a whole gets more enthusiastic when we are watching or discussing a film. Class participation increases dramatically. | It has helped us understand themes of our reading.                                                                                                                                            | The miss understanding of film is very different to many if you don't come out with something to think about then it is worthless. The movies go beyond [...] |

**APPENDIX F – CASE #1 - STUDENT SURVEYS (Students 11 through 14)**

| Questions                                                                                  | Student 11               | Student 12                                                                                                    | Student 13                                                                                                                                                          | Student 14                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| In your opinion, what are the possible drawbacks of including film in writing instruction? | Don't see any drawbacks. | Maybe some students might not remember the details of the movie and leave out crucial details in their essay. | That it is harder to quote. One would have to view it more than once to get something out of it. Maybe someone may not like a certain film, because of its message. | I believe the[re] is none because movies make people escape their world and go to someone['s] life and see what they are doing to survive. Literature [h]as [the] same power to help the reader understand opinions and facts of everyday life. So I believe the[re] is none because you got to make connections all the time. |

## APPENDIX G – CASE #2 - STUDENT SURVEYS

| Questions                                                                                                                                                                          | Student 1                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Student 2                                                                                                                                                                                              | Student 3                                                                                                | Student 4                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Aside from fitting into your course schedule or being a course requirement, what was your rationale for choosing this particular writing course section of first-year composition? | [T]his english class was required so that I would be able to transfer to a 4 year university. I decided to take this english class as Honors because I need a total of six Honors classes that is required for the Honors program. | Because I wanted to improve my writing skills and prepare myself for four year college.                                                                                                                | There was no other reason. Although this class was interesting and fun in some aspects.                  | I felt this course would improve my writing abilities as well as my critical thinking skills further than [first term English] had. I also took it to better prepare myself for a university writing class.                                                                  |
| What role did film play in this course?                                                                                                                                            | The films used in this course were used to show us examples of what we have studied or what we will study.                                                                                                                         | Film was used by Mrs. [Bowman] to introduce issues that we could use for research purposes.                                                                                                            | These movies provided [a] visual aid and a better understanding of issues that are [hard to discuss].    | Throughout the course we covered several themes. In addition, we watched many videos which gave us visuals to relate to and better understand those themes.                                                                                                                  |
| Did you find this course more enjoyable because it included film? Briefly explain.                                                                                                 | Yes, I found that this class was more enjoyable because "a picture is w[or]th a thousand words".                                                                                                                                   | Yes, I did because the films [were] about topics and issues that convey our society and affect us in positive or negative ways. Also, the film is something visual where we can view the actual thing. | The films that were provided were more documentaries so it was not enjoyable. It was more informational. | I would consider myself a visual learner, so the films we watched gave me perspective to what I read. Also, I looked forward to class because I knew I would be doing more than reading and writing. We also discussed the films in groups, which made class more enjoyable. |

## APPENDIX G – CASE #2 - STUDENT SURVEYS

| Questions                                                                                                            | Student 1                                                                                                                                                                                    | Student 2                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Student 3                                                                                                                                                                                              | Student 4                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| How did the film selections complement the course material or the theme of the course?                               | Throughout the course we learned about human rights, civil rights, and environmental issues so the films explained a little more in detail what we could not gain from the reading material. | Well each film was about a topic covered by the book. There was a film that helped me in choosing a topic for one of my research papers which was "Women in Ciudad Juarez". This convey the civil rights of women and the book had a chapter on civil rights. | The film selections were appropriate for every discussion.                                                                                                                                             | The films always paralleled something we were covering in class. For example when covering civil rights we watched films on Martin Luther King, Jr., we watched documentaries on child labor when discussing human rights, etc. |
| Have you received instruction in viewing films as a part of your high school English or college English courses?     | Yes.                                                                                                                                                                                         | No.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | No.                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Yes.                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| If yes, briefly describe your experience.                                                                            | In High School films were either used as examples to a certain time period. In other classes film were used as enjoyment.                                                                    | [-]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | [-]                                                                                                                                                                                                    | In my senior AP English class, we watched many films to see the differences in the way films are made now to how they were made in the past.                                                                                    |
| If no, in what ways has this instruction in first-year composition extended your knowledge of film and film viewing? | [-]                                                                                                                                                                                          | Now I can analyze more deeply the film and I can see it in a different way. Now I'm looking for things that will enhance my learnings.                                                                                                                        | Directors have different ways to persuade the viewer. This is all controlled by the camera. In other words, angles and how long the camera is on a particular image conveys [messages to] the viewers. | [-]                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

## APPENDIX G – CASE #2 - STUDENT SURVEYS

| Questions                                                                          | Student 1                                                                                                                                                                      | Student 2                                                                                                                 | Student 3                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Student 4                                                                                                                                                            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| How has the inclusion of film been particularly effective in this course?          | The usage of film in this class are used as examples to the reading material. The films help explain the issue in more detail.                                                 | It has been effective because it has helped in me in developing new ideas an[d] opening my attention to different issues. | The inclusion of the films were effective in ways that brought out emotions. The documentaries viewed throughout the course were on issues around the world, therefore; it made me look at different perspectives on an issue.                                                                | I think the entire class learned a lot about issue we discussed and the films e[x]tended our knowledge about issues we thought we knew about such as global warming. |
| In your opinion, what are the possible drawbacks of including film in this course? | A drawback can be that students will not read the required material and will instead just watch the film instead. Films should be used as example[s] of the required material. | I don't think that there are any drawbacks if film is used to enhance the lectures of the teacher and the student skills. | I don't necessarily think that there were drawbacks [to] including film only because it was provided as a visual 'aid' and support of the issues we have been learning. Some people are visual learners therefore I don't think that watching films would have a negative effect in learning. | I don't think there were any, I learned a lot from each film we watched.                                                                                             |

### APPENDIX H – CASE #3 - STUDENT SURVEYS (Students 1 through 5)

| Questions                                                                                                                                                                          | Student 1                                                                                                                                                                     | Student 2                                                                                 | Student 3                                                              | Student 4                                                                                                                                       | Student 5                                                                                                                               |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Aside from fitting into your course schedule or being a course requirement, what was your rationale for choosing this particular writing course section of first-year composition? | I wanted to improve my writing skills. I also looked up [Anne] on ratemyprofessors.com and she got really good responses, which pretty much sold me on [this writing course]. | A friend of mine recommended to pick the course.                                          | Because of her methodology and the ease of learning.                   | I have really been [good at writing]. I wanted to improve my skills.                                                                            | I had Dr. [Bratton-Hayes] for [another English course], and I also heard that she would be showing films in relation to writing essays. |
| What role did film play in this course?                                                                                                                                            | A major role, it pretty much helped me understand rhetorical writing and composition.                                                                                         | A lot of Alfred Hitchcock films like <i>Rope</i> , <i>Vertigo</i> , and many other films. | 85%, it helped me with general language skills.                        | A major factor, which best kept my interest throughout the class.                                                                               | It helped me view the details of a film, so I could put it in a[n] essay from just by watching it.                                      |
| Did you find this course more enjoyable because it included film? Briefly explain.                                                                                                 | Yes, I found it easier to understand a subject when I can associate it to something I can fully grasp. It really opened my eyes to style and structure of essays and movies.  | Yes even though I probably won't pass this course.                                        | Yes because we had to think and try to get into the director's "mind." | Very much so. It made it more interesting and easier to relate too which in return made it easier to pick up.                                   | I did. D[ue] to the fact that if there wasn't any film we would just spend the whole time learning gramm[a]r.                           |
| How did the film selections complement the course material or the theme of the course?                                                                                             | The films complemented the subjects in the <i>Allyn &amp; Bacon</i> book as well.                                                                                             | I don't know it's hard to explain.                                                        | It helped because I actually looked forward to class.                  | Very well. The films were different from one another, but after the assignments we completed you start[ed] to notice similarities between them. | It helped us not only understand, but actually see the specifics of the information.                                                    |
| Have you received instruction in viewing films as a part of your high school English or college English courses?                                                                   | No, I wish I had though.                                                                                                                                                      | Nope.                                                                                     | In high school.                                                        | No.                                                                                                                                             | Yes.                                                                                                                                    |

### APPENDIX H – CASE #3 - STUDENT SURVEYS (Students 1 through 5)

| Questions                                                                                                            | Student 1                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Student 2                                                     | Student 3                                                                                | Student 4                                                                                                        | Student 5                                                                                                                 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| If yes, briefly describe your experience.                                                                            | [-]                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | [-]                                                           | [-]                                                                                      | [-]                                                                                                              | My english teach in my junior year of high school had us watch films after we read the books. Thus absorbing information. |
| If no, in what ways has this instruction in first-year composition extended your knowledge of film and film viewing? | I understand the structure in movies and essays. I have always had trouble writing essays, but now that I see that movies have the similar structure of beginning, middle, & end it's easier for me to write essays. | I lived in Georgia, they don't have a course [like this one]. | [-]                                                                                      | It helps you look deeper into the [movie] rather than just viewing it as a form of entertainment.                | [-]                                                                                                                       |
| How has the inclusion of film been particularly effective in this course?                                            | Film has helped me grow as a student/writer. I enjoy viewing movies and analyzing them. I wish every English class could be this exciting and fun.                                                                   | Noticing a lot of types for the English course.               | By the single looking forward to class.                                                  | Again it makes it easier to understand because you are actually seeing it versus just seeing something on paper. | [-]                                                                                                                       |
| In your opinion, what are the possible drawbacks of including film in writing instruction?                           | I didn't experience any drawbacks. I learned how to think for myself and establish my own thoughts.                                                                                                                  | No popcorn.                                                   | Some students think that they can rent the movies so therefore they don't come to class. | Students making the assumption that the class is easy.                                                           | [-]                                                                                                                       |



### APPENDIX H – CASE #3 - STUDENT SURVEYS (Students 6 through 10)

| Questions                                                                                                                                                                          | Student 6                                                                                         | Student 7                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Student 8                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Student 9                                                                                                                                                | Student 10                                                                                                                                                           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Aside from fitting into your course schedule or being a course requirement, what was your rationale for choosing this particular writing course section of first-year composition? | I chose this class because I took [Bratton-Hayes] for [another course] and I enjoyed it.          | The course was different, just in the sense that other course just go by the book. Majority of the time no one cares or follows but in this class you are the writer, poet, director -- not what the book tells you. | [Anne] was recommended to me by a former student. They said she was the best and would work with you if you needed help.                                                                                                                    | Can't think of any reason.                                                                                                                               | In all honesty I was informed through ratemyprofessor.com that Professor [Bratton-Hayes] was an excellent instructor.                                                |
| What role did film play in this course?                                                                                                                                            | A larger role because almost all of our assignments were on Alfred Hitchcock movies.              | It showed myself what writing actually looks [like] when actual[ly] out of the camera, how there is much emotional and persuasion in your words.                                                                     | It kept me interested in writing papers and it opened me up to movies I normally would not see.                                                                                                                                             | A big part.                                                                                                                                              | It gave an interesting insight to structural writing and to audience appeal.                                                                                         |
| Did you find this course more enjoyable because it included film? Briefly explain.                                                                                                 | Yes, because reading in the book for the whole semester isn't as exciting as watching the movies. | I made the course a lot more interesting yet it explained [...] how the correct punctuation and correct group can change the tone or the mood.                                                                       | Yes for the reasons above.                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Yes, because one can compare and contrast.                                                                                                               | Yes, it helped by allowing a connection between writing and film. Many similarities can be found.                                                                    |
| How did the film selections complement the course material or the theme of the course?                                                                                             | The films gave us our assignments.                                                                | The film selections w[ere] a treat, yet very technical depiction in the style that they were written. They allowed us to place or combine our style with the films style.                                            | The films were easy to follow. Hitchcock was easy because I have seen most of his movies. These were good film choices because I believe that for most of the class, this was the first time watching Hitchcock and it wasn't overwhelming. | It helps to understand the book better (meaning <i>Allyn &amp; Bacon</i> ), the films were great example[s] for understand[ing] how writing takes place. | Hitchcock's artistry allowed for creativity. To me, this showed that while writing can follow a structural format, creativity may still be used in asserting points. |

### APPENDIX H – CASE #3 - STUDENT SURVEYS (Students 6 through 10)

| Questions                                                                                                            | Student 6                                                                                             | Student 7                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Student 8                                                                                                                     | Student 9                                                                                 | Student 10                                                                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Have you received instruction in viewing films as a part of your high school English or college English courses?     | Yes.                                                                                                  | No.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | [-]                                                                                                                           | [-]                                                                                       | [-]                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| If yes, briefly describe your experience.                                                                            | They were usually History films that we had to briefly summarize when they were over.                 | [-]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | [-]                                                                                                                           | [-]                                                                                       | [-]                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| If no, in what ways has this instruction in first-year composition extended your knowledge of film and film viewing? | [-]                                                                                                   | It changed the way I view films. I judge them on the dialogue or the way it was acted not so much on what cool effects they put [in them]. I see it for the great film it is or the poor attempt to place CGI not films to make bucks. | I now pay close attention to small details that eventually end up being important things. I'm more observant and open minded. | By opening my sense of visual, sound, and feeling that I never been in touch with before. | This course has expanded my view on film. I no longer watch movies and just follow the plot. I look for inconsistencies and ask why? Sometimes a personal joke or tribute may be found. |
| How has the inclusion of film been particularly effective in this course?                                            | It helps us see what kind of person Alfred Hitchcock was and how his personality effected his movies. | More so, its fun to see real people doing something great with writing. It allowed the class to see the work in action [....]                                                                                                          | [-]                                                                                                                           | [-]                                                                                       | See #2.                                                                                                                                                                                 |

**APPENDIX H – CASE #3 - STUDENT SURVEYS (Students 6 through 10)**

| <b>Questions</b>                                                                           | <b>Student 6</b>             | <b>Student 7</b>                                                                                            | <b>Student 8</b>                                                                                                         | <b>Student 9</b>                                     | <b>Student 10</b>                                                                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| In your opinion, what are the possible drawbacks of including film in writing instruction? | I don't think there are any. | Depending on the teacher and the choices it could be distracting but, that was not the case in this course. | The movie selection could discourage some students if the movies are too old, scary, or not interesting enough for them. | Writing about the same director over and over again. | The film may be disagreeable to some. It would be hard to include a film that the entire class can follow. |

### APPENDIX H – CASE #3 - STUDENT SURVEYS (Students 11 through 15)

| Questions                                                                                                                                                                          | Student 11                                                                                            | Student 12                                                                                                                                                      | Student 13                                                                                                                             | Student 14                                                                                           | Student 15                                                                           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Aside from fitting into your course schedule or being a course requirement, what was your rationale for choosing this particular writing course section of first-year composition? | The fact that the class was offered at night and I heard great reviews about her.                     | [A required class for transferring.]                                                                                                                            | [A required class for transferring.]                                                                                                   | Mrs. [Bratton-Hayes] seemed like an interesting teacher and I felt she had a lot to offer [....]     | To improve my handwriting and writing skills.                                        |
| What role did film play in this course?                                                                                                                                            | A lot, I didn't think it would, but it [was] very beneficial.                                         | I found this class to be rather interesting because of the films that were shown. It was very easy of me to write about a movie rather than an article or book. | I enjoyed the film, play in this course; it made it easier to describe and write. I actually enjoyed to write.                         | A big one! It was linked to about 80% of all assignments in my opinion.                              | A huge rol[e]. I just wish we could have watched more contemporary movies.           |
| Did you find this course more enjoyable because it included film? Briefly explain.                                                                                                 | Yes & no, yes because it was different and new but no because I don't like the types of movies shown. | Yes I did. See above.                                                                                                                                           | Yes, it was much nicer to watch and listen to a film than to have an unbearable lectur[e] that you lose attention to after 10 minutes. | At first I was close minded to the idea but after the course I realized that it was a good thing.    | Yes, I love movies and its always easy to write about something you enjoy.           |
| How did the film selections complement the course material or the theme of the course?                                                                                             | I hoped [Anne] would have mixed up the types of genres of different movies.                           | [-]                                                                                                                                                             | I had never seen any Alfred Hitchcock films, his films were such a wide variety of things. It was something I became interested in.    | Well, the theme of the course was suspense...all of the movies shown were suspenseful...enough said. | Hitchcock is a well known director with great movies. So it was pretty entertaining. |

### APPENDIX H – CASE #3 - STUDENT SURVEYS (Students 11 through 15)

| Questions                                                                                                            | Student 11                                                                                                                                                                            | Student 12 | Student 13                                                                                                                                             | Student 14                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Student 15                                                                               |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Have you received instruction in viewing films as a part of your high school English or college English courses?     | No, never.                                                                                                                                                                            | [-]        | No.                                                                                                                                                    | Yes.                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | [-]                                                                                      |
| If yes, briefly describe your experience.                                                                            | [-]                                                                                                                                                                                   | [-]        | [-]                                                                                                                                                    | During oral communications my teacher at [high school] had the class watch and analyze the film <i>The Natural</i> . We noted the symbolism in lighting and foreshadowing lines used by characters. It was quite interesting. | <i>Schindler's List</i> . Good movie but difficult to write about it b/c it was so long. |
| If no, in what ways has this instruction in first-year composition extended your knowledge of film and film viewing? | It has helped me be more open-minded and think more about why movies are what they are.                                                                                               | [-]        | I would much rather learn english and writing with films.                                                                                              | [-]                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | [-]                                                                                      |
| How has the inclusion of film been particularly effective in this course?                                            | Like #5, it makes me have a more open mind, not just about films, but books, poems, magazines, etc. Everyone is trying to get to the same point. It's how you get there that matters. | [-]        | They have been effective in this course by which I actually want to come to class and I am completely entertained and being educated at the same time. | It gave a face to the concepts used in the book.                                                                                                                                                                              | It just made everything easier and more enjoyable.                                       |

### APPENDIX H – CASE #3 - STUDENT SURVEYS (Students 11 through 15)

| Questions                                                                                  | Student 11                                                                                                                                                                                      | Student 12 | Student 13                                     | Student 14                                                                                                                                            | Student 15                                                                                                     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| In your opinion, what are the possible drawbacks of including film in writing instruction? | That not everyone will like the particular types of movies chose[n]. I hate horror/mystery/ghost movies, but college isn't about what we like its about what teaches us and shapes our futures. | [-]        | I'm not sure, I haven't really thought of any. | If people have a difficult time with visual-auditory learning film could be a devastating drawback. Some people find it easier to read books instead. | Don't know. I guess that if the students think the film sucks, then it would make it difficult to write about. |

### APPENDIX H – CASE #3 - STUDENT SURVEYS (Students 16 through 19)

| Questions                                                                                                                                                                          | Student 16                                                                                                                                                     | Student 17                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Student 18                                                                                                                                                    | Student 19                                                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Aside from fitting into your course schedule or being a course requirement, what was your rationale for choosing this particular writing course section of first-year composition? | I chose this particular course [...] because, I felt that I needed to explore other literary forms of writing w[h]ether it be through films, online, or books. | I had taken this class the previous semester and find that the teacher to be awesome. So when I saw her available I had to take it with her and plan to take my [next writing course] during the summer semester so I have her again. | Well, the scheduler was perfect for me. What made me stay was that she told us that she showed movies. I love watching movies and going over them afterwards. | [-]                                                                                                                                                         |
| What role did film play in this course?                                                                                                                                            | It played a lot. First of all it played a role on the format structure of the essay, on how to have a thesis: beginning with the intro, body, and conclusion.  | Watching film in the class gives an ease to it. It makes the [class] less tense.                                                                                                                                                      | Critical thinking. They weren't about keeping our minds off of school. We were learning to analyze the film.                                                  | Film played a huge role in this class. It actually became the part of the class I looked forward to. It was a new way of learning in my educational career. |
| Did you find this course more enjoyable because it included film? Briefly explain.                                                                                                 | Yes, because I enjoy movies.                                                                                                                                   | Yes. It helps you want to come to class.                                                                                                                                                                                              | Yes, because we learn to enjoy the thought and respect the work [that goes] into the film.                                                                    | I did. I think that it changes the "expectations" of a writing class. It makes the context of the class easier to embrace. Best of all it's not boring.     |
| How did the film selections complement the course material or the theme of the course?                                                                                             | [-]                                                                                                                                                            | The film complemented the course because it helped to make the reading from the book more understandable.                                                                                                                             | The[y] were all suspenseful.                                                                                                                                  | They were suspense movies and they are easy to follow because his [Hitchcock's] movies are consistent.                                                      |
| Have you received instruction in viewing films as a part of your high school English or college English courses?                                                                   | No.                                                                                                                                                            | No.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | [-]                                                                                                                                                           | [-]                                                                                                                                                         |

### APPENDIX H – CASE #3 - STUDENT SURVEYS (Students 16 through 19)

| Questions                                                                                                            | Student 16                                                             | Student 17                                                                                            | Student 18                                                                                                                                                            | Student 19                                                                                                                 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| If yes, briefly describe your experience.                                                                            | [-]                                                                    | [-]                                                                                                   | Yes, we viewed Sense and Sensibility because the teacher knew we wouldn't read the book on our own so he showed us the movie so th[at] we can appreciate Jane Austin. | [-]                                                                                                                        |
| If no, in what ways has this instruction in first-year composition extended your knowledge of film and film viewing? | In developing my critical analysis in writing my essays.               | I am already a [big] movie watcher. [The class] helped [present movies] from a different perspective. | [-]                                                                                                                                                                   | I look at film for more than entertainment. I can see some of the "behind the scenes" literary skills that go into movies. |
| How has the inclusion of film been particularly effective in this course?                                            | It's help[ed] me develop a stronger essay, with an interesting thesis. | It helps to relate the reading material.                                                              | [-]                                                                                                                                                                   | I think it has helped because it breaks up the monotony of the class.                                                      |
| In your opinion, what are the possible drawbacks of including film in writing instruction?                           | None.                                                                  | The only drawbacks I could guess is it makes the student more free to leave early or not attend.      | You don't finish in one night and you forget the first half.                                                                                                          | Not all students enjoy the type of films and may find it difficult to write on or may not enjoy the curriculum.            |



# APPENDIX I – CASE #4 - STUDENT SURVEYS (Students 1 through 5)

| Questions                                                                                                                                                                          | Student 1                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Student 2                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Student 3                                                                                                                                                                                             | Student 4                                  | Student 5                                                                                     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Aside from fitting into your course schedule or being a course requirement, what was your rationale for choosing this particular writing course section of first-year composition? | [B]esides being a requirement we are suppose[d] to take, I thought it would also be helpful in teaching me good learning and thinking skills and grammatical as well. The second reason why I choose is because I figure it would help me in the analysis of books in several ways I never thought of. It is also helpful and a fun class to take, due to the professor making the class an exciting class to take due to several writing assignments he made us create. I believe it was an amazing class to take. | I chose English 100 because I thought that it would be a good class to take and that it would teach me valuable writing as well thinking techniques that I would be able to use in other classes. For example in my psychology class it is a must to write a research paper. So the techniques that I acquired in English 100 would help my paper come out better and more professional. | I choose this English 100 class because I thought it would teach me good learning and thinking skills. Another reason is because I figure it would help me analysis books in ways I never thought of. | I just took this class to fit my schedule. | Personally, I chose Dr. [Fischer's] class due to a recommendation from my athletic counselor. |

# **APPENDIX I – CASE #4 - STUDENT SURVEYS (Students 1 through 5)**

| Questions                                                                          | Student 1                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Student 2                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Student 3                                                                                                                                                                                    | Student 4                                                   | Student 5                                                                                                                                      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| What role did film play in this course?                                            | I believe the films played an important part of the class because after reading the book the class got a chance to see the movie and distinguish the similarities and differences that were both in the book and in the film.                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Films played a major role in this course, because after we read a book (All the Pretty Horses) we would then watch a film and discuss it with the class. After this discussion we would then have to write a dialog that was vaguely similar to the book and or movie. The films also helped because they helped the reader understand the book a little more. | I think the film played an important part of this course because after reading the book we got to see the movie and see how what the similarities and difference were in both book and film. | [-]                                                         | I believe film has a very big factor in the course because it showed me the many views that people had of one topic which was [the] "western." |
| Did you find this course more enjoyable because it included film? Briefly explain. | Definitely I found this more enjoyable, due to the fact that after finishing reading the book I was anxious to see the movie. When watching the film I figure there were several different similarities to the movie and the book I was a bit disappointed when watching it. I picture several different stuff, but I guess that's what Hollywood is all about, due to the fact that it adds a bit of more details to the movie. | Yes, because of the teacher. He helped out the students as much as he could. He would give us another chance to make up our grade or get a better grade if we wanted to. Another reason why I enjoyed the [class] was because of the books we read. The books were very interesting and made the reader think about the situations that came up in the books.  | Yes, yes I did find this course enjoyable because it included film in the class. The class was not only reading.                                                                             | Yes, of course. Film is always enjoyable. It's like recess. | I actually liked this course a lot more. The use of films made comprehension easier and included a lot of the class in debates.                |

# APPENDIX I – CASE #4 - STUDENT SURVEYS (Students 1 through 5)

| Questions                                                                                                        | Student 1                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Student 2                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Student 3                                                                                                                                                                                   | Student 4                                        | Student 5                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| How did the film selections complement the course material or the theme of the course?                           | The film selections of this course complement the material in several ways by showing several scenes that were not in the book or even mention in the book which gave the book a bit more excitement. But, at times the[re] were things that were missing to complete the film. | The film section of this course complemented the material in many ways. The film showed a different side of the book, it either added stuff or it left things out. In my personal experience some of the films should have stayed as books, because the books seemed to have more information, information that made the book a great read. At least for me. | The film selections of this course complement the material in some ways by showing some scenes that were not in the book the gave it a little extra something. Some thing that was missing. | They all dealt with trespassing. A common issue. | I believe the film selections went well with each other since we had to find and discuss the connections with one another. |
| Have you received instruction in viewing films as a part of your high school English or college English courses? | [Yes.]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | [Yes.]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | [Yes.]                                                                                                                                                                                      | No.                                              | [No.]                                                                                                                      |

# APPENDIX I – CASE #4 - STUDENT SURVEYS (Students 1 through 5)

| Questions                                                                                                            | Student 1                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Student 2                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Student 3                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Student 4                                                                                                                                                                                              | Student 5                                                                                                                            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| If yes, briefly describe your experience.                                                                            | [O]ur professor made us watch the book and watch the movie and d[o] several analysis on the book and on the movie. And my experience they will never be the same which is the book and the movie are not the same. | I guess that in a way I have received instructions on viewing films in high school. But the experience has never been very good. Because I'm so focused on finding the material they ask to find that I pay no attention to the film's plot and don't really enjoy it. | In my English class I have been instructed to watch a film base on the novel that the class is reading. I think for an English class to read a novel that has a film it would help the students have a better understanding. | [-]                                                                                                                                                                                                    | [-]                                                                                                                                  |
| If no, in what ways has this instruction in first-year composition extended your knowledge of film and film viewing? | [-]                                                                                                                                                                                                                | [-]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | [-]                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Well, I took an "appreciation of film" class with [a professor] at [this college], so I was familiar with film and critical thinking. I think it helped me understand the message of the story better. | Dr. [Fischer] gave no instructions, I just knew that I had to watch and reply. I took in the information and was able to discuss it. |

# APPENDIX I – CASE #4 - STUDENT SURVEYS (Students 1 through 5)

| Questions                                                                                  | Student 1                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Student 2                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Student 3                                                                                                                                                | Student 4                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Student 5                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| How has the inclusion of film been particularly effective in this course?                  | I believe that it was an effective thing to do due to the fact that sometimes students after watching the film have more like a sense of reading the book for the second time. I have to be honest watching the movie first gives you a bit more excitement to read the book after wards. | The films made the class more interesting. It gave the class a different twist form the normal lectures I'm usually used to.                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | I think for an English class to read a novel that has a film it would help the students have a better understanding.                                     | Helps visually. Gives you something to imagine while reading.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | I was able to place a picture with the context within the book to help me comprehend the main themes.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| In your opinion, what are the possible drawbacks of including film in writing instruction? | It would have to be that some students if they dislike the movie then the possibilities of them reading the book would be really low. So I believe this would be some of the drawbacks of watching the film before reading the book. I believe it all depends on the person.              | I think that watching films in class discourage the students to read the book, because most of them figure that the book and the novel are the same thing or closely related to each other. When in reality at times they are very different or sometimes the film is missing information that can only be found if the student reads the novel. | I think the drawbacks that could discourage the students to read the novel and just watch the film and not read the novel as students are instructed to. | I think it helps some people learn who have a tough time focusing while reading. I would like to suggest that schools should offer two different types of learning. One to help people whom I mentioned in the first sentence of this question and another for individuals that do not have a problem with focusing on reading. | The biggest drawback I would see, is that since we are moving to an age of information, where everyone has the desire to get the main idea right away, it lets us forget the details. I see movies as a summary of their novel counterparts, and novels fills the gaps, within the plot of the movie. I just believe we need to use both novels and their movies to accomplish both comprehension and the ability to observe different writing techniques. |

# APPENDIX I – CASE #4 - STUDENT SURVEYS (Students 6 through 10)

| Questions                                                                                                                                                                          | Student 6                                                                                                          | Student 7                                                                                                                                                                                               | Student 8                                                                                                                                                            | Student 9                                                                                                                    | Student 10                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Aside from fitting into your course schedule or being a course requirement, what was your rationale for choosing this particular writing course section of first-year composition? | The challenge, I didn't do well in english when I was in high school so I wanted to try again now that I am older. | I looked up teachers on <a href="http://www.ratemyprofessor.com">www.ratemyprofessor.com</a> for this semester, and it said [Fischer] was a great teacher who uses [a] variety of tactics in his class. | The reason I chose this class wit Dr. [Fischer] is because I went on to <a href="http://ratemyprofessor.com">ratemyprofessor.com</a> and he had really good ratings. | I choose this course because I knew [P]rofessor [Fischer's] wife and I liked her teaching and thought they would be similar. | I chose this class because Mr. [Fischer] gives us a chance to revise our work. I feel English is a subject that you have to do over and over to get right and revisions definitely help people learn. Like they say, you learn from your mistakes. |
| What role did film play in this course?                                                                                                                                            | It helped us to learn how to analyze film as opposed to literature.                                                | It helped me to compare film and a novel together. I learned how visual images evoke emotion.                                                                                                           | It made me think more analytically, and helped me when reading the book.                                                                                             | Seeing the film helped me understand the book a lot better.                                                                  | Films made us analyze stuff. I felt all the discussions made us think and realize that our thinking isn't always right. It made me realize that all of us have different perspectives.                                                             |
| Did you find this course more enjoyable because it included film? Briefly explain.                                                                                                 | Yes, it broadened the topic for discussion.                                                                        | Yes because I am a very visual person. I remember things by visual but forget what I read.                                                                                                              | Yes, I enjoyed this class because it used film. Because it made a book visualable.                                                                                   | I did find this course more enjoyable because it had film [...] because the film helped me think like the characters.        | I enjoyed film in this course. It was relaxing but helped me comprehend the book better. It made things a lot easier and all the discussions made me think.                                                                                        |

# APPENDIX I – CASE #4 - STUDENT SURVEYS (Students 6 through 10)

| Questions                                                                                                            | Student 6                                                                                                                                            | Student 7                                                                                                                                                            | Student 8                                                                        | Student 9                                                                           | Student 10                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| How did the film selections complement the course material or the theme of the course?                               | The book helped to fill in the blanks of the movie.                                                                                                  | I feel that it tied all well together and it all related on another issue or another.                                                                                | It complements the material because it helps you think out of the box.           | The film selections helped me see how trespassing was seen and how horses was seen. | It complemented the course material because we had to relate the movies to the book. We had to compare and contrast between movies and that makes you understand everything more because you have to analyze many things and see their connections and how they aren't connections. |
| Have you received instruction in viewing films as a part of your high school English or college English courses?     | [No.]                                                                                                                                                | [No.]                                                                                                                                                                | Yes and no.                                                                      | Yes.                                                                                | Yes.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| If yes, briefly describe your experience.                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                      | N/A                                                                                                                                                                  | The only films I have seen in college was in Art hist. that really helped a lot. | I've seen films in other classes and the films have helped a lot.                   | In U.S. History classes and Health classes. Basically, the purpose of those films was for us to get a visual of what we are learning which helped a lot and very entertaining and interesting.                                                                                      |
| If no, in what ways has this instruction in first-year composition extended your knowledge of film and film viewing? | I was instructed to compare differences between (a) the book and (b) all three movies, as well as the running thread "trespass" of all the subjects. | It's helped me to get into reading by watching a film. High school always use[d] to make me read and I hated it. Now I like to read because I can relate it to film. | [-]                                                                              | [-]                                                                                 | [-]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

# APPENDIX I – CASE #4 - STUDENT SURVEYS (Students 6 through 10)

| Questions                                                                                  | Student 6                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Student 7                                                                                                                                                                                              | Student 8                                                                                                                         | Student 9                                                                                                                                     | Student 10                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| How has the inclusion of film been particularly effective in this course?                  | [-]                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Yes, it's helped me to value reading with a film.                                                                                                                                                      | I think by including film in this course made it more enjoyable. And it also helped me a lot in my writing.                       | By seeing the film it increased my ideas, helped me think outside the box.                                                                    | I analyzed things before like never before. I got in depth with the films and <i>APH</i> helped me get into depth with the <i>APH</i> book. I felt without the <i>APH</i> film, I would have had less understanding of the book.                                                                                                                                                           |
| In your opinion, what are the possible drawbacks of including film in writing instruction? | Being careful not to choose movies that are controversial enough to provoke yet not so controversial it has the course pulled. Aside from that I can't see any drawbacks, actually I think it expanded my mind. | Reading is good with film if [you're] reading with a film. If someone wants to watch the film and not read they will. It is a down side because lazy students will not read if they watched the movie. | I suppose the drawbacks would have to be that if a student watches the movie they may only watch the movie and not read the book. | The possible drawbacks are that the film might confuse students a bit, but you would have to see it once more to get a clearer understanding. | It may take time away from writing but not really. Films aren't that long and one class wasted on film won't really affect it. In fact it may help in writing because instructions can tell you to write about the film. It think to[o] much film is a drawback because it can take time from your writing but a couple of films I feel is essential in getting the most of what you read. |



## APPENDIX J - A NARRATIVE-CULTURAL ANALYSIS OF FILM: THE PARTICIPANTS~+\*\*

| Participant           | Pedagogical Goals                                                                                                                                                                         | Teaching and Learning Philosophy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Rationale for Using Film in Composition                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Reading and Film Selections                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Karen Baird           | To focus on the writing process. To mine the text for theme(s). To understand film's representation of ideology. To understand textual construction.                                      | Subscribes to the writing process. Begins with student knowledge and experience (through film) and moves to written texts. Preparing students for academic writing.                                                                                              | To foster student confidence in analyzing texts. To delve into the film representation of ideology through cinematic technique. To present different ways of seeing. To apply terms and concepts to other texts. To explore why some literary moments are filmic and others are not. To articulate intuitive knowledge of images. | Excerpt from <i>The Poetics</i> , "Theory of Tragedy," <i>Psycho</i> , <i>Mystic River</i> ; The Concept of the Hero, <i>Braveheart</i> .                                                                                                                                           |
| Clara Bautista**      | To prepare students for academic writing. To teach close readings and multiple interpretations. To discuss social-cultural issues.                                                        | Believes students rise top when teacher expectations are high. Begins with student knowledge and experience (through film). Aims at building learning communities in the classroom. Preparing students for the academic essay.                                   | To see what students can do with the film and written text. To have students extract meaning and think critically about film and other texts. To have students focus on themes, symbolism, and character analysis.                                                                                                                | "Three Kinds of Oppression," <i>Iron-Jawed Angels</i> , "Why Marriages Fail," "Vows," <i>Notting Hill</i> ; "Gender Role Behaviors and Attitudes," "What Kind of King," "Thank Heaven, For Little Boys," "Women Are Just Better," <i>Normal</i> .                                   |
| Dr. Madeline Bowman** | To help students gain awareness of the world. To teach students how to communicate and articulate their ideas through speaking and writing. To focus on social-cultural issue of the day. | Wants to enlarge student sense of self and the world so that ultimately they can be agents of change. Helps students to be critics of what they have seen, heard, and read. Works to build learning communities in her classroom. Focuses on the academic essay. | To tap into student knowledge and experience. To have students reflect on their relationship with film and how it affects them. To articulate the purpose and approach of film so that students can transfer this skill to the written text.                                                                                      | Reading selections from <i>Creating America</i> : "Identities," "Images of Gender and Family," "American Dreams," "Justice and Civil Liberties," "In the Land of the Free," "A Tapestry of Hope," <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> , <i>Mi Familia</i> , <i>Bowling for Columbine</i> . |

## APPENDIX J - A NARRATIVE-CULTURAL ANALYSIS OF FILM: THE PARTICIPANTS~+\*\*

| Participant          | Pedagogical Goals                                                                                                                                                                 | Teaching and Learning Philosophy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Rationale for Using Film in Composition                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Reading and Film Selections                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Emma Fields          | To hone critical thinking and writing skills. To help students mine the text for meaning. To broaden student understanding of the world. To teach rhetorical modes and fallacies. | Wants to see growth in her students' critical thinking and writing skills. Focuses on academic writing. Subscribes to the writing process. Implements teacher and peer modeling. Establishes learning communities in her classroom so that students learn in social context. | To teach students terms and concepts. To start classroom discussions. To build cultural literacy. To help students understand rhetorical modes or rhetorical structure. To use film as a scaffold for classroom conversation and student writing. To facilitate the bridge between visual and written texts.                                                                                               | Movie Reviews on <i>American History X</i> and <i>Do the Right Thing</i> and the films. <i>Malcolm X</i> , <i>In the Line of Fire</i> , <i>A Few Good Men</i> .                                                            |
| Dr. Theresa Hamilton | To hone reading and writing skills. To teach multiple points of view. To explore reading material in order to write about it. To teach students argument.                         | Works at honoring student cultural backgrounds, families, and neighborhoods. Welcomes different voices, interpretations, and ways of forming and structuring arguments.                                                                                                      | To demystify the act of writing and reading. To introduce a new voice into the classroom. To present film as interpretation of the written text. To teach from a literary perspective. To work with student knowledge and experience with film and television. To understand how genre affects how information is communicated. To note the similarities and differences between visual and written texts. | <i>Like Water for Chocolate</i> (novel and film). Campbell's Hero Mythology paired with <i>Spirited Away</i> , <i>Groundhog Day</i> , <i>The Family Man</i> .                                                              |
| Hugh Kava            | To hone critical thinking skill. To teach close readings. To think critically about writing and argument.                                                                         | Wants to establish learning communities in his classroom. Wants his students to be active learners.                                                                                                                                                                          | To explore cultural and ideological issues. To help students with critical thinking. To make connections between texts.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <i>Swingers</i> . "Hunger as Ideology," "Ways of Seeing," <i>The Thomas Crown Affair</i> . An Excerpt from Hitchcock <i>Films</i> , An Excerpt from <i>The James Bond Man: The Films of Sean Connery</i> , <i>Marnie</i> . |

## APPENDIX J - A NARRATIVE-CULTURAL ANALYSIS OF FILM: THE PARTICIPANTS~+\*\*

| Participant         | Pedagogical Goals                                                                                                          | Teaching and Learning Philosophy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Rationale for Using Film in Composition                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Reading and Film Selections                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Dr. Janice Robinson | To broaden student understanding of the world. To teach students critical literacy.                                        | "My job as a teacher is to reduce. There is no reason a teacher can't get to know her students when there are only twenty-five students in the class."                                                                                                                                                                    | To foster the skills students already have. To honor different kinds of learning and ways of knowing. To prepare for critical viewing. To work with student experience with film (students responsive). To broaden student understanding of the world. To teach students critical literacy.                                                                     | Who are we?: <i>The Preamble to the Constitution</i> ("We the people..."), <i>The Declaration of Independence</i> . Short Stories and Letters by James Fenimore Cooper, <i>The Last of the Mohicans</i> . Excerpts from <i>The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass</i> , <i>The Shawshank Redemption</i> . |
| Alyson Sanford      | To help students with reading and writing. To help students respond critically to the text.                                | Melds the teaching goals presented by the college and writing course with student abilities and talents.                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | To prepare critical readers and viewers. To include a text students are familiar with and are receptive to. To make the familiar (film) unfamiliar. To show the common elements between film and print.                                                                                                                                                         | <i>Smoke Signals</i> . An Analytical Framework of <i>The Hero with a Thousand Faces</i> , <i>The Lion King</i> , <i>The Fischer King</i> , <i>The Color Purple</i> .                                                                                                                                               |
| Kathleen Tedrow     | To understand how texts work. To learn how language works. To know the role of the reader in making the text have meaning. | Applies scaffolding, the importance of providing an early scaffold for people but also being able to take the scaffold away so that it becomes less relevant or the importance of teaching people to build their own scaffolds. Works with film as a part of this scaffolding process (student knowledge and experience). | To improve critical thinking skills. To get students to think about character and, especially, thematic analyses. To work with a medium students think well of. To scaffold student learning. To use film as a tool but also an object of study. To work with student knowledge and experience. To make unfamiliar the familiar. To understand intertextuality. | "On the Uses of a Liberal Education," "What Does a Woman Need to Know," "Feeding the Ancestors," "America Skips School," "In Defense of Elitism," "When Bright Girls Decide That Math is 'A Waste of Time,'" <i>Lean on Me</i> , <i>The Emperor's Club</i> .                                                       |

## APPENDIX J - A NARRATIVE-CULTURAL ANALYSIS OF FILM: THE PARTICIPANTS~+\*\*

| Participant       | Pedagogical Goals                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Teaching and Learning Philosophy                                                                                                                                                     | Rationale for Using Film in Composition                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Reading and Film Selections                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Dr. Daniel Weaver | To teach invention and convention. To sharpen critical thinking and writing skills.                                                                                                                               | Believes in a student-centered approach. Includes film study to foster student critical thinking skills.                                                                             | To 'read' film and discuss its themes and characters in class.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | "In a Grove," <i>Rashomon</i> . "The Swimmer" and <i>The Swimmer</i> . <i>Throw Mama from the Train</i> . <i>Killing Us Softly</i> , "A Work of Artiface," "Barbie Doll." <i>Heart of Darkness</i> (novella and film), <i>Apocalypse Now</i> . |
| Matthew Wheeler   | To develop critical thinking skills so that students become critical writers. To acknowledge different subject positions. To think in larger ways (from self to the world). To delve into social-cultural issues. | Wants his students to be critical of the written and the visual text. Works from student knowledge and experience to build critical thinking skills when working with written texts. | To foster student learning by presenting a variety of texts. To include film study to honor a social practice that students are familiar with. To make film unfamiliar. To group ideas, motifs, themes, etc. To work with texts students are receptive to. To think thematically, culturally, and rhetorically about the text. | "Racism and Oppression," <i>Crash</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Stuart Yau        | To improve critical thinking skills. To broaden student understanding of the world. To understand textual construction.                                                                                           | Moves away from traditional teaching methods. Builds learning communities. Wants his students to be active learners.                                                                 | To identify themes and issues across texts and media. Film study is especially useful in teasing out ideas from written texts like <i>1984</i> , <i>God's Politics</i> , and <i>Amazing Grace</i> .                                                                                                                            | <i>God's Politics</i> , <i>Amazing Grace</i> , <i>1984</i> , <i>The Village</i> , <i>Good Night</i> , and <i>Good Luck</i> .                                                                                                                   |

~Each participant has received a pseudonym.

+ Each of the participants teaches at one or more two-year colleges.

\*\*These participants are cases featured in the study.

# APPENDIX K - A CINEMATIC-RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF FILM: THE PARTICIPANTS~†\*\*

| Participant              | Pedagogical Goals                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Teaching and Learning Philosophy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Rationale for Using Film in Composition                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Reading and Film Selections                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Karen Baird              | To focus on the writing process. To mine the text for theme(s). To understand film's representation of ideology. To understand textual construction.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Subscribes to the writing process. Begins with student knowledge and experience (through film) and moves to written texts. Preparing students for academic writing.                                                                                                                                                           | To foster student confidence in analyzing texts. To delve into the film representation of ideology through cinematic technique. To present different ways of seeing. To apply terms and concepts to other texts. To explore why some literary moments are filmic and others are not. To articulate intuitive knowledge of images.            | Film clips from sports movies and documentaries; <i>Bleachers</i> , <i>Million Dollar Baby</i> , and <i>Miracle on St. Anthony's</i> (novel and film).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Dr. Anne Bratton-Hayes** | To teach students to be better critical thinkers so that they become better writers. To foster student learning through smaller tasks that build to larger tasks. To get students to access the text. To help students make the transition from what questions to how and why questions. To explore the relationship between images, words, and sound. To understand composition in a broad sense. To help students think rhetorically about the text. | Wants her students to access the text and practice textual analysis. Draws on student knowledge and experience through film. Teaches convention and rhetorical modes but is a believer in developing invention strategies and student voice. Wants to students to think critically about media they enjoy on a regular basis. | To engage students as active learners. To explore interesting film structures. To understand the role of audience in watching films. To consider the ethics of viewing film (pleasures and censorship). To foster active, critical viewing. To help students make the transition from what questions to <i>how</i> and <i>why</i> questions. | Reading selections from <i>Beyond Words</i> : "Moving Pictures: Writing to Tell Stories," "Film Stories of the Twentieth Century." "Last Laugh: Was Hitchcock's Masterpiece a Private Joke?" "Hitchcock's Use of Profiles in <i>Vertigo</i> ." <i>Psycho</i> , <i>Strangers on a Train</i> , <i>Rope</i> , <i>Vertigo</i> , <i>Marnie</i> , <i>North By Northwest</i> , <i>The Village</i> . |

# APPENDIX K - A CINEMATIC-RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF FILM: THE PARTICIPANTS~+\*\*

| Participant        | Pedagogical Goals                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Teaching and Learning Philosophy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Rationale for Using Film in Composition                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Reading and Film Selections                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Emma Fields        | To hone critical thinking and writing skills. To help students mine the text for meaning. To broaden student understanding of the world. To teach rhetorical modes and fallacies.                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Wants to see growth in her students' critical thinking and writing skills. Focuses on academic writing. Subscribes to the writing process. Implements teacher and peer modeling. Establishes learning communities in her classroom so that students learn in social context.                                                                                                                     | To teach students terms and concepts. To start classroom discussions. To build cultural literacy. To help students understand rhetorical modes or rhetorical structure. To use film as a scaffold for classroom conversation and student writing. To facilitate the bridge between visual and written texts.                    | King's "Why We Crave Horror Movies," <i>The Blair Witch Project</i> .                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Dr. Eric Fischer** | To help students find their place in the college classroom (Health influenced). To counter the negative responses students have towards reading and writing. To hone student critical thinking skills so that they become critical writers. To encourage student invention and expression. To teach convention through a variety of texts. To encourage a community of readers and writers. | Helps students move from working-class literacy to academic literacy. Works from student knowledge and experience to foster adult literacy. Builds on student responses to generate classroom dialogues. Takes a social interpersonal approach to textual analysis. Works with the process. Creates the existential experience of the characters and couples this with a genre approach to film. | To help students make connections between home and school cultures. To encourage close readings of the text. To foster adult literacy and critical thinking skills. To present film as interpretation of the written text. To foster student understanding regarding their relationship with film culture (Giroux & Aronowitz). | Reading selections from <i>The St. Martin's Guide to Writing</i> : "On Being a Real Westerner," "Love: The Right Chemistry." 1984 (novel and film). <i>All the Pretty Horses</i> (novel and film), <i>The Wild Bunch</i> , <i>Brokeback Mountain</i> . |

## APPENDIX K - A CINEMATIC-RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF FILM: THE PARTICIPANTS~+\*\*

| Participant     | Pedagogical Goals                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Teaching and Learning Philosophy                                                                                                                                                                                     | Rationale for Using Film in Composition                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Reading and Film Selections                                                  |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Dr. Grace Leigh | To enable her students to compete and cope with other classes. To teach all of her students academic writing across the disciplines. To mine the text for meaning and argument. To understand broaden student horizon and understandings of the world. To help students understand local, national, and cultural environments. | Works from student knowledge and experience. Wants her students to make the transition from their home language and expression toward academic argument. Facilitating textual analysis through learning communities. | To facilitate new ways of seeing the text. To develop student critical thinking skills. To think academically about the meaning of the film text (especially the comedy genre). To present ideological concepts to understand and analyze the text. | <i>Harold and Kumar Go to White Castle, Fridays, Half Baked, Fight Club.</i> |

~Each participant has received a pseudonym.

+ Each of the participants teaches at one or more two-year colleges.

\*\*These participants are cases featured in the study.