

Film Review Project

The purpose of this project is to think critically about how the South is portrayed in the film, to consider how this region and its perceived characteristics--including its stereotypes and myths--are used to deliver a message through the medium of film.

The intention of this project is not to push a particular agenda. However, the film you view may have an agenda to push--and that agenda may make certain claims about the South in terms of class or race or family or work, etc. Some agendas you may like or dislike, agree with or not. The purpose of this project is not to have you like or agree with any of the films nor to push any agenda.

Rather, the purpose is **to see the South almost as a character in the film**, not just as a backdrop.

Some of the films in the list more readily depict the South as a central figure in the film than do others. And some films will have more things for you to observe about the function of class or work attitudes than other films will. For example, some films will treat race as a central subject of the film where others will not address it at all.

Knowing that each film will vary in its treatment of and concentration on the aspects asked about in the questions for this project, do your best to answer the questions to your best ability.

Instructions

- ▶ Read through these instructions and familiarize yourself with the topics to be discussed for your responses for this project.
- ▶ Select one of the approved films for this project.
- ▶ Locate the film via the method most readily available to you.
 - Use a streaming service to which are subscribed.
 - Check one out from a local library (college or public).
 - Borrow one from a friend, neighbor, or relative (it is possible that you may already own one!).
 - Watch on television channel.
 - Access one of the films linked to the course site via Infobase and Feature Films for Education made available through the CCCC Libraries.
 - Located in the Assignments button, Film Review Project folder, Film Links folder.
- ▶ View the film.

- ▶ Type your responses to the questions for this project.
 - Respond to 7 required topics.
 - Answer in at least 1 full paragraph for each topic.
 - Project should have at least 7 paragraphs.
 - Be specific and use details from the film to support your answers.
 - Respond to the *most relevant* of the questions for each topic.
 - Each film will vary in its treatment of certain aspects asked about in the questions for this project, so, again, choose the most relevant to your film and do your best.
 - Refer to previous textbook readings, unit notes, to inform some of your responses to certain topics already covered in the first half of this course.
 - Do NOT spend the entire 7 paragraphs summarizing the film.
 - Paragraph 1 asks for a concise summary.
 - Do NOT spend the entire 7 paragraphs personally responding to the film.
 - Paragraph 7 asks for your personal response.
 - Avoid second-person point of view—that is, using personal pronouns like “you” and “your.”
 - Use present tense to discuss artwork like film.
 - Present tense: This film shows...
 - As opposed to past tense: This film showed...
- ▶ Upload the document into the Film Review Project Submission Box.
 - File should be a Microsoft Word doc (doc or docx) or a pdf.
 - Don't have Microsoft Word? Don't fret! See instructions in project folder for how to save a Google doc as a Word doc.
 - As CCC student with a Gmail account, you should automatically have access to Google docs.

Topics/Questions & How to Structure the Responses

Topic/Paragraph 1 ► Introduction

Give a bit of background about the film, including...

- Title (which should be italicized every time it is mentioned in writing).
- Year of release.
- Concise summary in 1 paragraph of 3-5 sentences.
 - Do not include your personal opinion about the film.
 - Save this information for Topic/Paragraph 7.
- Statement of what you think is one of the messages of the film.
 - There could be more than 1 message of the film.
 - Include at least 1 message, no more than 3, in this paragraph.

Topic/Paragraph 2 ► Setting

Answer the following:

- Where is this movie set (not filmed)? The town, the state?
- In what time period?

Respond to the *most relevant* of the following ideas in at least 1 good paragraph:

- How do portrayals of Southern landscape (natural landscapes, buildings, houses, roads, etc.) contribute to the overall depiction of the region?
- How does the setting make the region appear? (i.e., poor, rural, lavish, etc.)?
- How does the setting of the South factor into the message of the film?
- Is the setting integral to the action of the film? If so, in what ways?
 - For example, could this film have the same basic message, influence, perception, etc., if set in another part of the country/world? Explain.
- In what way/s does a house or building reflect the film's message?
 - The house is a big metaphor for family and even society in meaning Southern stories, as will be mentioned in the literature unit. A prime example is E.A. Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" in which the dilapidated house represents family dysfunction and possibly the collapse of the certain elements of the South as a whole. So in this way, sometimes houses are a big deal in films (but sometimes not).
- In what way/s is the setting depicted as distinctively Southern? Explain.
- Does the portrayal of the Southern setting seem accurate? Consider the time period of the film. Explain.

Topic/Paragraph 3 ► Characters

Respond to the *most relevant* of the following ideas in at least 1 good paragraph:

- What is the general depiction of Southerners in this film?
- How accurately/fairly did the actors portray Southerners?
 - Consider things like accents, dress, mannerisms, etc.
- What Southern stereotypes (for example, a Southern belle) are portrayed?
 - How does this stereotype function in the film?
 - Refer to previous textbook reading and to Unit Notes about the Mythic South for information on Southern social types (stereotypes, really).
- In what way/s is any character distinctively Southern? Explain.
- Is the setting of the South integral to the character/s of this film? Explain.
 - For example, could this character exist, have the same influence, be perceived in the same way, etc., if setting was different? Explain.
- Does the portrayal of the Southern characters seem accurate? Explain.

Topic/Paragraph 4 ► Family and/or Work

Respond to the *most relevant* of the following ideas in at least 1 good paragraph:

Family

- What kinds of family unit is shown in the film?
 - Sometimes alternate groups of people (friends, co-workers, etc.) can be depicted as a family group.
- How is the family unit portrayed?
 - In terms of itself.
 - In terms of its relationship to or place in society.
 - In terms of its influence on any character/s.
- In what way/s does the family's house/residence impact the family unit?
- In what way/s is the family unit depicted as distinctively Southern? Explain.
- Does the portrayal of the Southern family seem accurate? Consider the time period of the film. Explain.

Work

- What kinds of work are shown in the film?
- Is certain work depicted as unique or significant to the setting?
- Is certain work depicted as being conducted differently in the region in contrast to the same work in other regions?

- Do attitudes about work conflict among characters?
- Do ideas of “progress” affect attitudes about work?
- In what way/s is certain work depicted as distinctively Southern? Explain.
- Does the portrayal of the Southern work seem accurate? Consider the time period of the film. Explain.

Topic/Paragraph 5 ► Class and/or Race

Respond to the *most relevant* of the following ideas in at least 1 good paragraph:

Class

- How is class portrayed in the film?
- How does a class struggle affect...
 - One character’s inner life?
 - A relationship between characters?
 - A greater area, like a town or even the South as a whole?
- In what way/s are certain elements of class depicted as distinctively Southern? Explain.
- Does the portrayal of class in the South seem accurate? Consider the time period of the film. Explain.

Race

- How is race and/or race relations portrayed in the film?
- How does a struggle centered around race/race relations affect...
 - One character’s inner life?
 - A relationship between characters?
 - A greater area, like a town or even the South as a whole?
- In what way/s are certain elements of race and/or race relations depicted as distinctively Southern? Explain.
- Does the portrayal of race in the South seem accurate? Consider the time period of the film. Explain.

Topic/Paragraph 6 ► Spirit of the South

- As a region, how you would describe the way the South is portrayed?
 - In your opinion, what were the intentions of the film in representing the South in this way?
 - For example, to depict the true spirit of the people/region, to ridicule the South/Southerners, to show change, to convey the complexities of family or class or race relationships, etc.?

- In what way/s is this film distinctively Southern? Explain.
- Or maybe you don't think this film should be considered Southern. Explain.
- Does the portrayal of the South and/or Southerners seem accurate? Consider the time period of the film. Explain.

Topic/Paragraph 7 ► Personal Response

Now you can let loose: What did you think of this film?

Respond to the *most relevant* of the following ideas in at least 1 good paragraph:

- What did you think of this film? Explain.
- Did you like this film? Why or why not?
- What was something about this film that resonated with you or moved you in an unexpected way?
- What character did you particularly...
 - Like?
 - Dislike?
 - Identity with?
 - See as parallel to someone else in your life?
- Did your reaction to this viewing of the film differ in any way from your reaction to a previous viewing of the film? Explain.
- Would you recommend this film? Why or why not?

How to Format the Film Review Project

- Double space the entire document.
- Use 12-point Times New Roman font.
- Use either the Microsoft Word default margins (1-inch for top and bottom and 1.25-inch for right and left) or 1-inch margins for top, bottom, right, and left.
- Type your name, my name, date, and course name on the first 4 lines on the left of the first page only.
- Use the following headers that correspond to the topics/paragraphs:
 - Introduction.
 - Setting.
 - Characters.
 - Family/Work
 - Class/Race
 - Spirit of the South
 - Personal Response
- Use paragraphs.
 - You may use more than one paragraph.
 - Each topic should have at least one paragraph as a response.
- Use complete sentences.
- Use correct grammar and spelling.
- There is no set page length for this report.
 - That said, to answer each of the questions adequately, it probably will be at least 2 pages.
 - If your review is less than a page and a half, you should consider beefing up your answers.