

Essay 2: Analysis of a Test Object

Description:	4-5 pages, double-spaced, plus a separate MLA-format Works Cited page
Sources:	1) One film (either <i>Do the Right Thing</i> or <i>Gran Torino</i>) 2) Fox, “Out the Country” 3) One other RAW essay (choose among Berreby, Hine, Quindlen, and Foner)
Total Points:	250
Due Dates:	Rough draft (3 copies) due Fri 3/23; Final draft due Mon 3/26

The Assignment

Analyze a film’s representation of an issue, question, or phenomenon using evidence from one or two film scenes. Perform a close analysis of your chosen scene(s) and develop a thesis that engages specific cinematic details to form an argument about the film as a whole. Apply two RAW essays as lenses to extend and complicate your argument, using them in service of this essay’s larger goal: to enhance the reader’s understanding of the film.

Strategies

For getting started / For your thesis: Consider how the themes and concepts from your RAW essays interact to provide you with different angles from which to form an argument about your chosen film. Use tools for visual analysis and “The Method” on the film to generate specific, concrete details. You may focus your argument on two or more scenes (roughly 4-6 minute segments), but remember to use “10 on 1” rather than “1 on 10”. Use those details to make an argument about how the film represents an issue, question or phenomenon. WA’s suggestions for X-Y thesis statements (101-2) may be helpful here.

For structuring your argument: With your claim and the essays in mind, choose your representative and complicating evidence from the film carefully. Apply “10 on 1” (WA 211-3) to the evidence you choose in order to say more about less. Use WA’s strategies for comparison/contrast (100-2) to help structure your argument. You might isolate an interesting similarity within a difference or an interesting difference within a similarity between scenes, or use the RAW essays to engage the film from differing perspectives.

For using RAW essays: Put two RAW essays in conversation with each other as a means to advance your claim about the film. Use a claim or concept from each of the essays as lenses to develop, contextualize, and complicate your claims (review WA 118-9). Test the limits of the essays’ usefulness. Remember, a lens rarely matches a test object exactly, so make good use of mismatches that reveal the essays’ limitations.

Criteria for Evaluation

1. Does the essay engage RAW essays in order to advance a specific claim about the film scene(s) (source as a lens) that enhances the audience’s understanding of the film?
2. Are main points supported through the analysis of concrete details from the film scene(s) (“10 on 1”? In other words, is this an *analysis* and not merely a plot summary?
3. Does the essay advance a focused, complex claim about the film as a whole?
4. Does the essay exhibit coherence through a logical flow of ideas, well-developed paragraphs, and the use of transitions, attributive tags, and strong verbs? Are the citations complete and in correct MLA format?