

“Turning Fiction into Film”
Portfolio II
Due Monday, April 9th, 2012

The following assignment builds upon the screening reports and movie reviews that you have already written, and anticipates the critical essays that you will be writing in your final portfolios. Once again, this type of review is described on pages 9-11 in *A Short Guide to Writing about Film*. I believe that it would be helpful to all if everyone made an attempt to address some of their initial ideas for these reviews by responding to the relevant discussion threads that I will be posting for each film, as among other things, this will allow you to gain and develop important critical insights regarding each work of the following three films.

Please read carefully, and follow instructions closely.



“I’ve seen things...”

Review # 1). Write a two to three page movie review of Ridley Scott’s *Blade Runner, The Final Cut*, imagining that it will be read by your fellow students in our class. In your review, please address and include each of the following, as doing so will provide you with a little practice in the type of thinking and writing more typically found within the purview of the critical film essay:

- At least two comparisons to the book of which the film is an adaptation (you have done this before with *The Night of the Hunter*, so let this be your guide).
- **The importance of vision** to the manner in which the director has presented the story to the viewer. You might be helped in this endeavor by finding a scene or two in which you were drawn into the text by its use of visual ideas, by its presentation of important content in this regard, by its somewhat elliptical editing, and then exploring these in some detail. It might also be helpful to remember the history of narrative voice-over in this film.
- **The importance of vision** thematically to the film. Again, you might be helped in this task by locating and addressing specific examples of this theme in all of its richness within the film, both in individual scenes, and throughout the film as a whole.
- **The importance of vision** to the the possible reactions of the viewer to the cinematic presentation and thematic content that you have described in your account thus far. In other words, what does Scott want us to most recognize in this work? What kind of knowledge does this type of recognition entail? How does the nature of fiction in general allow this sort of “truth” to be communicated? Are there any limitations to this sort of “fictional” presentation in film?

Finally, either recommend that your fellow students see the film or not, and do so in a manner which takes into account all that you have included in your review in light of the above.



“I’m the only one here!”

Review # 2). Write a two to three page movie review of Martin Scorsese’s *Taxi Driver*, again imagining that it will be read by your fellow students in our class. Within your essay, be sure to discuss the influence of John Ford’s *The Searchers* on the film, paying specific attention to those elements of each work that are most relevant in addressing this influence. **Summarize** the film, giving relevant details about **plot**, **cinematography**, and **theme(s)**. Please make note of the importance of the mirror scene in *Taxi Driver*, and explain how it pertains to your particular analysis and review. Finally, either recommend that your fellow students see the film or not, do so in a manner which takes into account all that you have included in your review, and don’t hesitate to mention *Paris, Texas* if you feel that this will improve your essay.



“I knew these people.”

Review # 3). Write a two to three page movie review of Wim Wender’s *Paris, Texas*, once again imagining that it will be read by your fellow students in our class. Within your essay, be sure to discuss the influence of John Ford’s *The Searchers* on the film, paying specific attention to those elements of each work that are most relevant in addressing this influence. **Summarize** the film, giving relevant details about **plot**, **cinematography**, and **theme(s)**. Please make note of the importance of the mirror scene in *Paris, Texas*, and explain how it pertains to your particular analysis and review. Finally, either recommend that your fellow students see the film or not, do so in a manner which takes into account all that you have included in your review, and don’t hesitate to mention *Taxi Driver* if you feel that this will improve your essay.