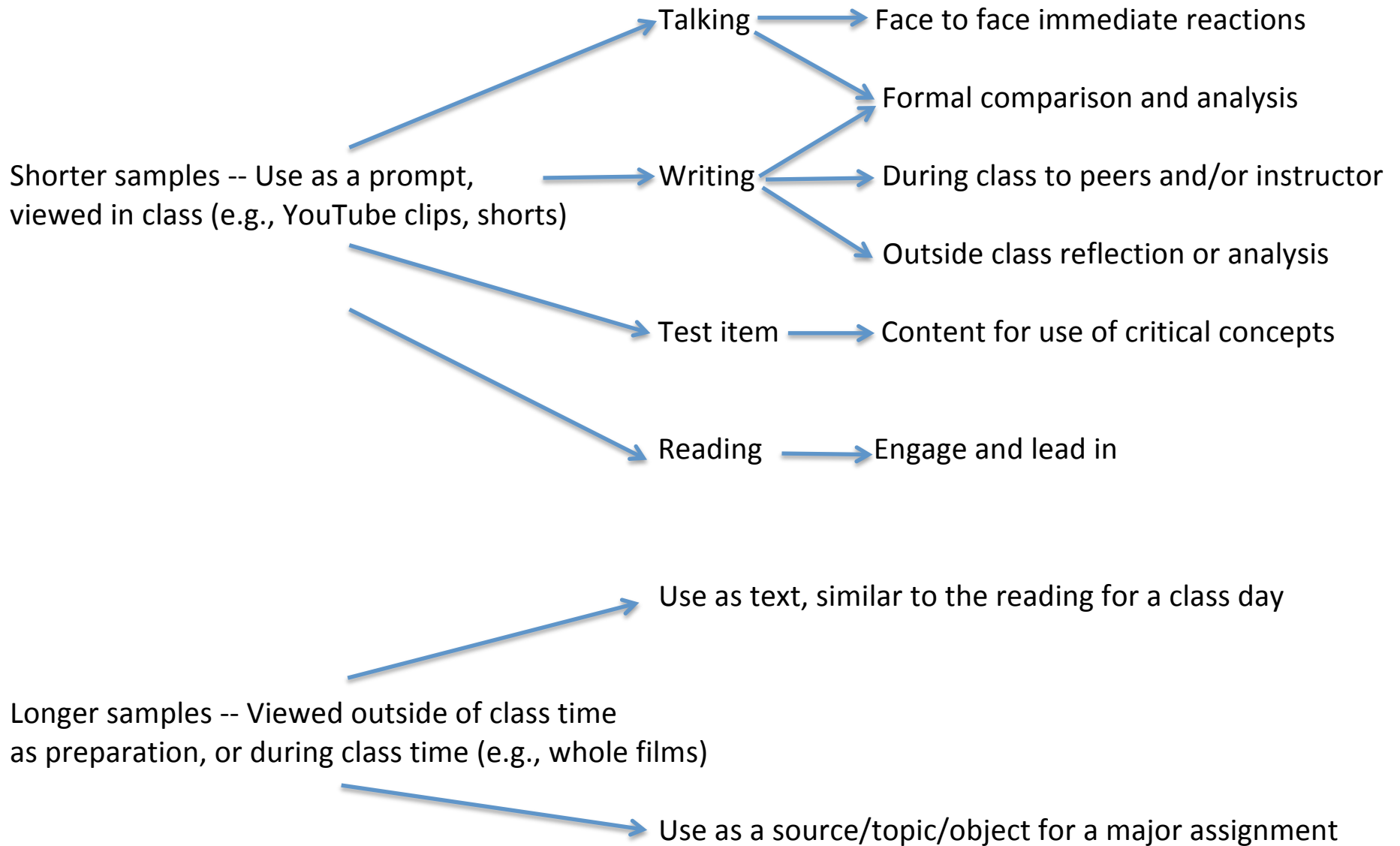


Using Film in the Classroom
Mary Beth Woodson (Film) and Ann Martinez (English)



Best Practices

Preliminary Questions:

- Why do I want to use film for this class?
- What do I want them to take away from the film clip?

Don'ts	Dos	Things to Consider
Don't assume students have seen the film.	Always give a context for the short scene in class, or introduce the film (whether they are watching it in class or as homework).	There are a variety of films to choose from (i.e., older movies, black & white films, foreign films). Sometimes obscure films can yield more engagement from students, since they have no preconceptions about them.
	Always warn students at the start if there is foul language, violence, or adult situations in the scene/film, and give students the option to step out for a few minutes if needed.	
	Always tell them what to look for before you play the scene/film.	Assigning tasks to students while watching the film (e.g., each one must keep track of a certain character/thing/idea; they have to watch for key concepts; they have to journal as they watch, etc.) keeps their attention focused.
Don't take up the whole class time.	Always allow time for discussion, even if that means you'll be finishing the film the following class session.	
		Have a graded element to keep students accountable.
	Always have a back up plan when showing a clip or a film in class – technology is what it is, and can sometimes fail at the worst moments.	

Spring 2014 GTA Final Fridays

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Sample Assignments

Short Clips for Short Assignments

Using a Scene of the Familiar to Teach About the Unfamiliar: Language and Culture

When looking at the Rohirrim as a people, and Rohan as a community in *Lord of the Rings*, how does their characterization shed light on our understanding of the Anglo-Saxons and their culture? How does Theoden's mead hall compare to Hrothgar's mead hall in *Beowulf*?

After watching the funeral scene from *Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*, discuss the effect Eowyn's lyrics, sung in Old English, have on the scene, on the story? How does your knowledge of Old English change your understanding of the scene? As a woman in a warrior culture, how does she embody the traditions of the "peace-weavers" of the Anglo-Saxon period?

Short Clips for Long Assessment

Using Scenes for a Final Exam: Connecting and Applying Concepts

This part of the exam consists of viewing and responding to clips from two films we have screened this semester.

Each clip will be screened twice; you should take notes each time. You will then be given twenty minutes to write your response to each prompt. Please use the back pages of Part One of the exam for your response. The more details you can go into, the better.

1. Referring to concepts from lecture, discussion, and reading, discuss how cinematography, sound, editing, and *mis en scene* are used in the clip from *Wall-E* to: a) establish the tone and setting of the story; b) establish character; c) reinforce themes in the film.
 2. Referring to concepts from lecture, discussion, and reading, discuss the ideological concepts (i.e., politics, gender, race) behind the clip from *This is England*. How do setting, *mis en scene*, character, and narrative shape the scene and relate to the film's themes?
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Long Film for Short Assignment

Full-Length Film Used as Basis for Challenging Readings and Concepts: Critical Thinking Reading Journal

You have seen *The Truman Show* (1998), by Peter Weir, and you have read Nietzsche's "On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense." Now it's time to bridge these works.

Nietzsche asks, "What does man actually know about himself? Is he, indeed, ever able to perceive himself completely, as if laid out in a lighted display case?" (452).

First of all, what is he talking about? Explain this quote as best you understand it by doing the following: unpack the meaning of it (think back on our paraphrasing exercise – *unpack* the quote by first paraphrasing it, and then expanding on it – what you personally think of it). As you expand on the quote, refer back to *The Truman Show* for

examples: what elements of the movie, or of Truman himself, do you find relevant for this quote? How can you use one to explain the other?

Long Film for Long Assignment

Full-Length Film Used as Basis for Critical Engagement: Political Analysis

The tagline from the film *King Arthur* (2004), by Antonie Fuqua, proclaims “Rule Your Destiny.” Indeed, it seems that whoever controls the Arthurian narrative controls the country. For example, in the 12th century, English monks at Glastonbury Abbey “discovered” Arthur’s grave, thereby gaining political protection while aiding English monarchs in their attempts to suppress the rebellious Welsh by silencing the latter’s claims of Arthur’s return. Scottish chroniclers emphasized Arthur’s bastardy in order to promote Scottish independence, while the Tudor monarchy traced its lineage to Arthur as a means of legitimizing their rule. Yet at the same time, from the moment of its inception in medieval France, writers have turned to the Arthurian legend, using it as a vehicle to critique these traditional establishments of power—to indeed change the future of their societies.

After reading the medieval texts of Sir Thomas Malory’s *Le Morte D’Artur*, Marie de France’s *Lanval*, and the Pearl-poet’s *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* how is the Arthurian narrative presented in this contemporary American film? During the Victorian period, Alfred Lord Tennyson used the legend in his *Idylls of the King* to discuss issues of nationalism and colonization. T.H. White, in his *The Once and Future King*, used the legend as a platform to respond to World War I. And in the 1960s the Kennedy White House became known as “Camelot.” Looking at our current historical moment, what are the political undertones in the film? What is being said about colonialism, religion, nationalism? Consider that this film was made just three years after September 11, 2001 – has this influenced elements of the story?