



# Film as a Teaching Tool

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## **ABSTRACT**

Teaching college students to write in a time of decreasing literacy, short attention spans, and a pervasive sound bite paradigm can be challenging. It becomes particularly delicate in required English courses where much of our captive audience would rather be doing something else, someplace else, with somebody else. It follows then that anything that can make the writing experience a more compelling one is an indispensable teaching tool. Making use of our post modern concentration on visual image over the written word leads to the consideration of the film, an area generally approached in the English or Communication domains from either a literary or a technical point of view, as a semiotic product to be valued for its artistic content or its communicative attributes.

While the use of film as writing prompt may have both advantages and disadvantages, it is not among the arrows in most instructors' pedagogical quivers.

This manual aims at correcting that. It provides the means to make writing real to the college student, both native English speakers and ESL, and covers everything from the various rhetorical modes to final exams to research papers, based around films that are compelling, non controversial and a rich source of writing material.

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## CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

Entering the average English 101 classroom on the first day of a new semester we find ourselves greeted by a group of (mostly) upturned faces in various stages of thought or, in some cases, reverie. In the average community college these faces will belong to students ranging in age from 19 to 55, with the occasional younger or older exception, with backgrounds and literacy levels as varied as their ages. Other than the fact that the particular group of students you may be facing is on average, mostly female, the only thing they have in common is a desire to pass the course and get on with their lives. ESL classrooms are a bit different in that the students tend to be more homogeneous age wise, generally in their mid 20's to mid 40's, and better educated. They are also in general more committed to becoming effective writers in the English language, but at the same time are negotiating a variety of language and cultural issues.

The pleasures of teaching lie in its challenges, and freshman writing classes present a dual one. At the same time that we are working with the motivated students who are convinced of the need for, and/or personal fulfillments of, effective writing, we are also working to bring the unconvinced on board.

Having what is in effect a captive audience, it is relatively easy to be lulled into complacency by classes that conform to the usual curve of a few A's, one or two F's and a grouping of B's and C's, our egos bolstered by the few who tell us what a remarkable learning experience our class has been, as well as by the visible improvements we see in overall student writing. Teaching the rhetorical modes, uses of thesauri, critical reading and thinking, research and writing techniques do work.

What I want to focus on here, however, is the *why* of writing, the need to give students a reason to write. While building the basic understanding that writing is a skill (that can of course be

raised to an art by a few) and introducing the tools and methods that help one to become more skillful, it is essential to provide a reason to use that skill. The so called writing prompt, either experiential or reading based is the pedagogical tool we use and, based upon our own individual insights and creativity, can be made to work quite nicely.

We are however, for better or worse, living in an image dominated world. Advances in science and technology have made it possible to view what at one time we were only able to imagine as we heard about or read about things. This ability comes with disadvantages as well as advantages. Images can go by too rapidly for us to grasp important nuances, and once they are past there is not always an 'instant rewind' feature that enables us to stop and think about and reexamine what we have just seen.

Nevertheless, image is a key to our perception of the world and the basis of our worldview. In our reading, we are continually creating mental images as we attempt to make sense of what we read. Arnheim in what has been called a seminal work refers to Schopenhauer's premise that 'Reasoning is of feminine nature; it can give only after it has received,' asserting that '...truly productive thinking takes place in the realm of imagery.'

As teachers of writing, an essentially interactive communicative skill, we have a profusion of secondary aims that includes among other things critical thinking and appreciation of literature of various types. We should remember at the same time that the drive to visualize is ever present and it may still be true that a picture is worth a thousand words.

In an extremely interesting ongoing study involving film literacy and film making with junior high school level students, the British Film Institute has found, not surprisingly, that student compositional skills in regard to structuring a film were better developed than were their writing skills. Further, they found that the technical demands of film making sharpened certain

communicative skill sets that are applicable to language functions. Specifically, they posited a correlation to Halliday's three language metafunctions, always present in images as well as language, the ideational (or denotational), the interpersonal, and the textual (or compositional). The concept the BFI team is working on, in a very general way revolves around some level of understanding on a systemic functional grammar level being advanced as a result of working with film, and having a carryover effect to the writing classroom. This is beyond the scope of this paper but does point to a strong relationship between learning characteristics in the visual and textual domains of social semiotics, or as Lemke puts it, (p. 87, emphasis in the original)

We make meaning with all the resources at our disposal: linguistic, pictorial, gestural, musical, choreographic, and most generally *actional*. The most fully developed analysis so far is that for the deployment of linguistic resources in the construction of meaning in verbal text and discourse. But we never make meaning with language alone....

What is obvious then to anyone who has successfully used films in his or her writing class is also firmly grounded in theory.

## CHAPTER 2 CHOOSING A FILM

Our major goal as writing instructors is arguably to empower students to communicate effectively and, to varying degrees, elegantly.

A film can be inserted at any point in any program to enhance any writing objective. Properly chosen, it is an amazingly flexible tool. Because of its multi modal character, it compels attention in situations where written works sometimes fail. Due to the interactive nature of the process it is rare to find the frustrating lack of student engagement that occurs all too frequently with written works. To draw on Arnheim once again, viewing, or perceiving, is an active process in which the viewer is constantly changing focus and ranging through the visual field in order to draw conclusions. Since the conclusions of any given watcher will draw on past perceptions and experience to modify his or her insights and understanding, there will always be a variety of responses to any given film.

It is, in my opinion, extremely important to choose the ‘right’ film. As writing instructors we have a number of objectives to choose from. Do we want to present a provocative theme in an attempt to sharpen our students’ critical thinking? Do we want to call their attention to some social injustice, some historical or political insight, some compelling political figure, some aspect of the human condition? Or, do we just want to use the film as a springboard for a writing assignment?

Of course the last objective overrides the rest, but they all, consciously or unconsciously play a role in our decision to use a particular film. And, I stress here, it should be *our* decision.

Attempting to fit your objective to a preconceived notion of what the student will like teeters perilously on the brink of pandering to pop culture. Bringing in *Get Rich or Die Tryin’* for instance, the film showcasing the rap musician 50 Cent may, on some level, get you a few cheers

and add to your cool image, but students don't need us for that. If one agrees that our function as instructors is to open our students' eyes to knowledge and concepts of consequence that they might otherwise not encounter, then analyzing current popular films is not a particularly effective way to further that objective.

It is also wise to preview films for content that may prove embarrassing or offensive to students in your class. We are dealing with college students and it is not necessary that films be 'G' rated; in fact that will clearly have a stifling effect on our choices. Nevertheless, we do want to be aware of the sensibilities of particular students. Our choices are endless and varied so there is never a compelling reason to use any one particular film.

As a general rule, I use films that will be new to most students. They may be Hollywood classics, independent films, so called cult classics, foreign productions with subtitles. Foreign language films dubbed into English are not a good choice since they tend to lose much of the character of the original actors. To dub over the voice of, say, Catherine Deneuve, is to lose the intonations, the emotion, the rhythm, the auditory imagery of the original regardless of language. It's like reading a summary instead of its source- the general meaning remains but key nuances are lost. Reading subtitles, however, soon becomes easy, an almost unconscious transference connecting the auditory to the visual while maintaining the integrity of the original. In many DVD's, English subtitles can be accessed even in English language films, an important tool in ESL classes, as well as developmental classes, where a word or phrase that sounds strange and unfamiliar may become more recognizable in written form.

Another area to be considered when choosing your film is the particular time constraints of your class. A typical three credit course may meet three times a week for fifty minutes each period, twice a week for roughly seventy five minutes per meeting, or once a week for approximately

two and a half hours. Feature length films generally vary between an hour and a quarter to two hours plus, with an occasional film approaching three hours. There are also numerous compelling short films that can run anywhere from fifteen minutes to almost an hour.

The options are many. You can opt for a short film or a longer one, fine tuning the discussion time accordingly, based on the amount of time you may want to allot. While it is always better to show an entire film straight through without breaks, in cases where your time allocation precludes that possibility, proper planning will enable you to divide the film over one or more periods with appropriate discussion or assignments scheduled as you go.

## CHAPTER 3 TECHNICAL ASPECTS

### The Setting

The usual home viewing situation, sprawled on a couch, eating and drinking, leaving momentarily for restroom breaks or more food, is not what we want. It is roughly analogous to reading and listening to pop music at the same time. We are aiming for a viewing experience that will totally absorb the viewers' attention and, within the limits of the environment in which we are working, it is critically important that we do our best to create it.

The darker the environment the better. We are striving to create an art house format where all attention is focused on the film. Having a room without windows in a lightly traveled corridor is ideal. On the other end of the continuum is the ubiquitous beige/yellow light transmitting window shades, wonderful for creating menacing silhouettes in 1940's film noir, but less than ideal for visual presentations. Nevertheless, in an imperfect world, we strive for the ideal but make the best use of what we have.

### The Format

While we may remember the 16mm sound projector fondly with its comforting whirring and clicking reinforcing a sense of engagement in the film, it is generally no longer used. The advent of videocassettes and DVD's that are easy to store, relatively permanent, damage resistant and inexpensive made the heavy, bulky, damage prone celluloid film products obsolete, as a staggering and ever increasing quantity of films became accessible to the general public, along with readily obtainable and affordably priced playback equipment, giving birth to a major new industry.

Generally we have a choice of two formats, Videocassettes (VHS) and DVD.

Videocassettes are becoming generally obsolete, but there are still many films available

only in this format. As well, there is a new format coming into use called Blu-ray, but for now, VHS and DVD are our choices.

Videocassettes play only on video recorders (VCR) which connect to a television set and are viewed on the TV monitor, like a television program.

DVD's can be played on either a computer or a DVD player. The image can be shown through a television set, on the computer monitor, or projected onto a separate screen.

The screen, with its large image, is vastly superior as a viewing medium, coming closer to duplicating the total involvement created in the movie theater. For that very important reason, all other things being equal, the DVD is the preferable choice.

#### Equipment

It is a good idea to check with the AV faculty as to what's available to you. The staff here at the college is knowledgeable and helpful, not only with what's available, but also with instruction on how to use it, if necessary.

The choices are usually either a TV/VCR combination or a "smart cart," which contains a laptop computer, a separate DVD player and a projector. Some rooms have a built in podium, containing a DVD player, VCR, and controls which enable you to operate a ceiling mounted projector. Most rooms have a screen hanging on one of the walls. If not, a portable one can be brought in.

## CHAPTER 4 PRESENTING THE FILM

### Classroom Structure

There is no need to change the way you arrange your classroom. A little judicious planning and common sense are all that is necessary. Viewing and hearing issues are basically all that need to be considered, which leaves a lot of flexibility. Other than that seating can be arranged in rows or in a horseshoe shape. The instructor can be anywhere along the horseshoe, in front of the room, at the rear, or anyplace else. If group work or pair work is planned, arrange the seating accordingly.

### Pre Viewing Preparation

While we may often assign stories or articles with a minimum of pre reading preparation, films, by their nature require a more structured approach.

To begin with (and to state the obvious), it is absolutely essential that you view the film at least once, and perhaps twice before showing it to a class. Unlike written text where you can augment your memory with a quick skimming of the piece to respond to a question that needs answering, where film is concerned you have only memory and understanding to rely on.

In addition to your own perceptions it's a good idea to familiarize yourself with the wealth of often vital information available on the internet which provides a variety of reviews, critiques, analyses, background material and anecdotes. Not only may this prove enlightening, even pivotal, to your own perception, improving thereby the quality of your presentation, but it can also help students to add substance to their writing assignments as well as to perform the more mundane task of helping them remember the film. Moreover,

it will also help develop research skills. Many students will go beyond Google when they feel a need to better grasp some specific concept they're trying to formulate.

I remember one writing assignment flowing from *Casablanca* in which a student, while looking up background information, came across the story of Chiune Sugihara, the Japanese consul in Kaunas, Lithuania in 1940 who risked his career and life to issue unauthorized visas that saved the lives of several thousand Jewish refugees. Fascinated by the story, she found a way to work it seamlessly and effectively into her paper. By one of those strange twists that make life so interesting, I found myself several years later, while traveling in Lithuania, in an unplanned contact with the director of the Sugihara Institute, a research and memorial institution in Kaunas.

On another occasion, an EAP student from Mali, in an assignment related to the short film, *Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge*, found himself intrigued by stories of spies for the Confederacy. His research which, like the Sugihara discovery had not been specifically assigned, made the story come alive for him, adding to the quality of his paper, as well as to the breadth of the learning experience.

### Pre Viewing Activities

We want, as always, an eager, motivated audience. and that begs an introduction calculated to build anticipation, or at least curiosity. It's good to remember what Roger Ebert, the film critic, in a somewhat different context had to say about the Marx Brothers classic, *Duck Soup*, that "to describe the plot would be an exercise in futility." It's good as well to bear in mind that what you may find compelling may be totally boring to your students, but with a bit of careful planning can be made more appealing.

When a written text is assigned, there are ordinarily questions assigned along with it to be answered with some degree of comprehensiveness. Not only does this help to focus the student's attention, but in situations of total lack of interest (face it, they exist!) it keeps the reader alert at least in relation to their need to complete the assignment. The same method works with film. Directing the student's perceptions will keep them engaged. How engaged depends not only on the film, but also on the instructor's creativity in preparing the class for the showing. In *Casablanca* it may be, "Round up the usual suspects," in *My Fair Lady*, comparisons between Dr. Frankenstein and Professor Higgins, in *Memento* a discussion of tattoos and Alzheimers, in *Elevator to the Gallows*, some background on the participation of Miles Davis and the history of black American jazz musicians in France.

The key of course is not to overload the class with facts, but to attempt to balance on the edge between necessary information and challenging "teaser." A sample of introductory material is in Appendix I.

## CHAPTER 5 THE WRITING ASSIGNMENT

### Rhetorical Modes

I am not sure everyone teaches using the rhetorical mode model, but it is certainly the prevalent and current method of choice in the textbooks I've worked with in four different area community colleges. They are defined in a number of different ways but in general include, in no specific order, the following:

- Narrative
- Descriptive
- Compare/Contrast
- Cause & Effect
- Process Analysis
- Definition
- Exemplification
- Argumentation

Questions concerning how to approach them, which is more important, which can we omit, where should we begin, etc. are matters of individual choice and not relevant here. What is relevant is how we are going to integrate a film that will positively impact the learning process.

- Narrative Idea

In *Night on Earth*, a quirky sort of film by Jim Jarmusch, five vignettes are occurring in five different locations at the same moment across the world. Although they occur simultaneously, due to the different time zones the events take place at different times of the night. Starting in Los Angeles, the film moves on to New York, Paris, Rome, Helsinki. Other than the moment of occurrence, the vignettes share nothing in common other than that they are centered around taxi rides.

After showing the film, the assignment was to write a factual or fictionalized narrative essay concerning an event occurring anywhere in the world (including New Jersey) at the

equivalent of 6 PM EST. When assigning this type of topic one should of course be prepared for the several adolescent variations on surfing and drinking Foster's while fighting off sharks in Australia, but along with that will be things like dreamy dissertations on romantic conflicts in Venice and the slightly scary excitement of discovering exotic street foods in Istanbul or Seoul.

- Cause and Effect

*Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge*, a 30 minute film based on a short story by Ambrose Bierce can be the basis of an assignment involving cause and effect. The film shows the hanging of an apparent spy during the Civil War. There is essentially no background or character development, so 'filling in the blanks' would be both intriguing in itself and a valuable lesson in understanding the concept of causal chains.

- Compare and Contrast

*Casablanca* is a film I use often. It is a compelling story with strong characters and a provocative historical element but at the same time has a light touch. An example of a compare/contrast type essay is in Appendix II.

### Film as a Classroom Final Exam

Having an in class final based on a film energizes the students and seems to bring out their best work. It is not something I do very often and when I do, I don't announce it until the last week of the semester. Retaining the element of the unexpected and the motivational effect of the novelty value oblige limited usage.

My class final normally consists of a list of ten or more topics each of which requires a thoughtful response, and which cover a variety of themes. The individual student chooses their essay topic from the list which, along with specific instructions regarding writing

materials and other details is emailed to the class several days before the exam. The use of a film is handled in basically the same manner except that accommodations are made for the time constraints involved which will vary with the particular schedule of weekly meetings. In a class that meets three times a week for fifty minutes, however, it may not be productive to use this type of exam, although it can be done with a thirty minute film, chosen carefully.

I choose a film that I can show in one period, allowing time for discussion afterward. I will often ask the class if they can come thirty minutes early on the day of the showing and stay late if possible. I never require this, but normally the anticipation of seeing the film, along with allowing some flexibility about the exact day of showing seems to override other concerns. I have never had an absentee on that day.

Discussion time and questions after the showing are of course unpredictable and since this is a final it is important to allow adequate time. There is normally a gap of several days between periods during which I take questions by email that we may not have had time for in class, so that by exam day everybody is clear about what they want to do.

A sample final is included in Appendix III.

### Film Based Research Papers

*Casablanca* was used as the basis of a two thousand word research paper in a Composition 1 class. Various topics involving different combinations of rhetorical modes (cause and effect, description, comparison/contrast, argument) were provided for students to choose from. The assignment required that students research the time period of the film in order to add context. Although some felt some initial concern about which direction they would take, the end results were notable for their creativity, ingenuity and excitement.

## CHAPTER 6 CHOICES AND SOURCES

### Some Suggested Films

*Casablanca* as mentioned previously is a favorite of mine and has been popular with college students forever. There is an ambiance, some sort of air of old world charm that always seems to capture the imagination of students. They are intrigued by the ability of a film lacking color and graphic special effects to engage them to such an extent. The length, approximately ninety minutes, is convenient, the setting is dramatic, the plot easy to follow and compelling, the characters charismatic and the historical context relevant to contemporary students.

*Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge* is a short film of approximately thirty minutes that is readily available in area libraries. Adapted from an Ambrose Bierce short story, it is a relentlessly moving film with a surprise ending that always elicits a few gasps.

*Night and Fog* is a short film by the French director Alan Resnais. Artistically it is a masterpiece, somewhere between tone poem and documentary. I haven't used it myself, but it is a gripping presentation and worth considering.

*Elevator to the Gallows*, is a film from 1957 directed by twenty four year old Louis Malle, starring Jeanne Moreau, with a driving cool bop jazz score written and performed by a young Miles Davis who was playing in Paris at the time. The ninety minute film includes a couple of youthful protagonists, a compelling plot heavy with twists and turns and unexpected chance developments, characters with devious motives, and long sequences of a moody nighttime Paris; in other words a treasure trove of writing material. If you'd like to preview the film's trailer, go to [www.youtube.com/watch?v=uoQVRyh5aZE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uoQVRyh5aZE).

There are a multitude of films available that will work in a writing class. The ones mentioned are illustrative but haven't even scratched the surface; the choices are infinite. The questions remaining concern how to choose a film and once chosen, how to obtain it.

### Which Film Should Be Used?

Since it is probably counterproductive to use a film for a writing assignment more than once or at most twice in a semester, it is not necessary to have more than a few films available to you. However, it is true that every class is different, as is every instructor. Moreover, we all like a bit of variety so it's good to know what's available. A bit of research on the internet will take care of that.

### Helpful Websites

If your object is just to begin to learn 'what's out there,' besides what's playing at the local multiplex, scrolling through websites that collect professional reviews of films will be of great value. Reading synopses also helps, but a well written review by a professional critic (not site user reviews which tend to be derivative and shallow) will give a clearer understanding of what the film may offer you. Sites such as *youtube* that may also offer short video clips are another way to learn.

The following are just a few of the many sources for information on films old and new, foreign and domestic:

- [www.rottentomatoes.com/](http://www.rottentomatoes.com/)
- [www.mrqe.com/](http://www.mrqe.com/)
- [www.imdb.com/](http://www.imdb.com/)
- [rogerebert.suntimes.com](http://rogerebert.suntimes.com)
- [www.filmsite.org](http://www.filmsite.org) (particularly the 100 best films section. This is probably the single best link for expanding and augmenting your film knowledge.)

- The Criterion Collection (<http://www.criterion.com>) offers DVD's for sale, but is also a wonderful depository of reviews, categories and generally useful information.
- *Youtube* (<http://www.youtube.com/>) and its various sub sites are mostly for personal entertainment, but there are nuggets of useful information serendipitously scattered about. Their 'screening room' section ([youtube.com/ytscreeningroom](http://youtube.com/ytscreeningroom)) is a source for searching for short films.
- The Sundance Film site (<http://www.sundance.org/>) is another source for previewing and purchasing short films although they will all be relatively recent.
- The British Film Institute (<http://www.bfi.org.uk>) is another site with a variety of material.

#### Where to Obtain Films

The easiest and least expensive way to obtain DVD's and VCR's is at the library.

Obviously this requires a current library card. The college library has a good selection as do the county libraries. The catalogue for the state of New Jersey, called Jersey Cat can be accessed online through any local library, including the college library, or directly at <http://njsl-agent.auto-graphics.com/>. Once you master the logon instructions you can search basically every library in the state for whatever you're looking for and have it sent to a library close to you. The inter library loan system is a wonderful tool which also makes out of state holdings available to you.

It may also be useful to consider renting or purchasing as it's relatively inexpensive and convenient. For a reasonably small investment you can build up a readily available library of your own, even if you buy only two or three films a year. The internet again is

a prolific source of materials. In many cases you can download a film directly to your computer and then either copy it to a DVD or bring your laptop to the college and connect to a projector.

Browsing through the vendor catalogs will also provide a great deal of information about the films they are offering and occasionally a short preview clip. Some sources, such as the Criterion Collection, have been mentioned previously. A few additional ones are:

- <http://www.indiepixfilms.com/>
- [www.netflix.com](http://www.netflix.com)
- [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

There are also the traditional brick and mortar retailers like Blockbuster as well as what remains of the smaller neighborhood video stores. Although we all lament the loss of personal service and mom and pop businesses, nevertheless the internet sources are significantly more comprehensive in their inventories and the information they make available as well as considerably easier to navigate, to browse and to use.

## CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION

The assignments presented in the previous chapter are clearly not designed as lesson plans. Their purpose is to point out the flexibility of film usage as a tool for the teaching of writing in the college classroom. How it is used depends entirely on the goals, objectives, and creativity of the individual instructor.

The benefits of a well chosen film include:

- It is self motivating.
- It will engage mediocre students as well as superior students.
- A properly chosen film will provide abundant essay and research material for any rhetorical mode.
- It encourages “writing across the curriculum.”
- In ESL classes it will provide additional linguistic and cultural benefits.
- In disciplines such as Psychology, History, Sociology, Nursing and others, you will find plentiful thematic material to encourage student writing.

On the other hand it is well to remember, among other things that:

- The study of film is a separate discipline. While such things as camera angles and composition, lighting, sound, and other aspects of what Iedema refers to as “the peculiar semiotic structure and rhythm” of a film can and should be recognized in some instances, film theory and history, and the study of film as literature are not part of the writing class.
- The use of film should be limited in the writing class as it does consume class time. I do not attempt to show a film in every section I teach and I have never done more than one short and one normal length production in a section.

- We are using film to teach writing, not to indoctrinate or to deliver a message. “Issue” films and heavy handed productions like *Crash* or simplistic Michael Moore documentaries will tend to distract from our purpose and are more appropriate to a Political Science or Sociology classroom. On the other hand a properly chosen film that examines social, political or moral issues will always stimulate your class.
- Watch for teaching opportunities. *My Fair Lady* for example can be written off as a lightweight relic, but its treatment of class distinctions, gender issues, and social manipulation, as well as its relationship to the Pygmalion myth and to the GB Shaw drama gives weight to this Hollywood light opera.  
Unfortunately at three hours, it is a bit long for our purposes.

In general, the same conventions that apply to choosing a short story or article apply to the film. The interests of the instructor, combined with knowledge of a class’ capabilities and characteristics will be the determining factors. Creatively applied they will provide an exciting and meaningful teaching and learning opportunity.

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## **APPENDIX I SAMPLE INTRODUCTORY MATERIAL**

The film, *Casablanca*, has many themes running through it, although it was not made to be a “serious” film, but merely a good story. It has certainly succeeded in doing that, maintaining its popularity for over 60 years now. Although the historical setting (World War II) may not be familiar to many, the characters and events still resonate.

*Casablanca* is full of famous quotations. A few, such as, ‘Round up the usual suspects’ have even become part of American slang. The list below is not nearly complete.

Everybody who has enjoyed the film over the years has their own favorites, but the following are a good sampling. Watch and listen for them. Some may be helpful in developing your essay.

- **Round up the usual suspects**
- **Play it again, Sam. (it doesn’t exactly appear in this form)**
- **I remember every detail. The Germans wore gray, you wore blue.**
- **As the leader of all illegal activities in Casablanca, I am an influential and respected man.**
- **I was misinformed.**
- **Of all the gin joints in all the towns in all the world, she walks into mine.**
- **We’ll always have Paris.**
- **Louie, I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship.**

## **APPENDIX II COMPARE/CONTRAST ASSIGNMENT**

The effective use of language, including vivid verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and metaphors will be a factor in grading your paper (as always). An effective and attention grabbing introduction, concise, coherent, and relevant support paragraphs and a compelling conclusion will add up to an 'A' paper.

The assignment is as follows:

*There are many complex and interesting characterizations in the film as it weaves its way through their sometimes very subtle motivations and the effects they have on each other; Rick, Major Reynaud, Sam, Ilsa, Ferrari, Victor Laszlo and various minor characters.*

*Compare and contrast the characters of Rick and Major Reynaud.*

Bear in mind that the topic is not a simple one and the assignment is not long enough to really do it justice, so do your prewriting and be concise as well as comprehensive in your analysis.

## APPENDIX III FILM BASED CLASS FINAL

### FINAL EXAM, ENG 101

The film, *Casablanca*, has many themes running through it, although it was not made to be a “serious” film, but merely a good story. It has certainly succeeded in doing that, maintaining its popularity for over 60 years now. Although the historical setting (World War II) may not be familiar to many, the characters and events still resonate.

*Casablanca* is full of famous quotations. A few, such as, ‘Round up the usual suspects’ have even become part of American slang. The list below is not nearly complete.

Everybody who has enjoyed the film over the years has their own favorites, but the following are a good sampling. Watch and listen for them. Some may be helpful in developing your essay.

- **Round up the usual suspects**
- **Play it again, Sam. (it doesn’t exactly appear in this form)**
- **I remember every detail. The Germans wore gray, you wore blue.**
- **As the leader of all illegal activities in Casablanca, I am an influential and respected man.**
- **I was misinformed.**
- **Of all the gin joints in all the towns in all the world, she walks into mine.**
- **We’ll always have Paris.**
- **Louie, I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship.**

For your final exam, it would be wise to go through your text and just skim through the explanatory sections on the different rhetorical modes (description, compare/contrast,

cause/effect, definition, argumentation, etc.) even if we didn't cover them in class. Just skim and note some of the highlights, which should help you in your essay.

You will be marked for both your content and the way in which you present it. The effective use of language, including vivid verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and metaphors will be a factor.

An effective and attention grabbing introduction, concise, coherent, and relevant support paragraphs and a compelling conclusion will add up to an 'A' paper.

Please use letter size [8 1/2x 11] lined white paper with a straight edge (no spiral bindings) and blue or black pens. You may bring a dictionary, thesaurus and your text.

Choose one from the following topics and write an essay of 1-2 pages:

1. *Without my giving away the ending, Rick's decision at the end of the film is the effect of a combination of many causes. Write your essay explaining comprehensively the causal chain that led to the decision and why you think it resulted in that particular decision.*
2. *Describe and define Rick.*
3. *Describe and define in detail the Café Americain.*
4. *Write an argumentative essay stating why you think Rick's decision was or was not the correct one under the circumstances. If you think he made the wrong decision, write an essay persuading your readers what you think he should have done.*
5. *Describe and define the city of Casablanca as it is depicted in the film.*

6. *Sam, the piano player, and Rick have a symbiotic relationship, much of it only implied. Using several of the rhetorical modes, describe in comprehensive detail the strong bond that holds the men together.*