

## FREN 310

### ESSAY 1

#### *Guidelines*

You have to write a 3-page research paper on one of the proposed topics below. For this essay, I am asking you to respect some specific rules regarding the organization of your ideas and arguments, the resources you will use and how you will use/quote these resources.

#### **General organization**

What I will be looking for when I read your essays is a clear argumentation that will back your personal view of the chosen topic.

To make sure that you write a paper with a clear framework, you first need to come up with a plan that summarizes the different aspects connected to the topic that you will develop.

I also want you to start your paper with a clear introduction that sets the problematic you intend to expose or the questions you intend to answer. The introduction is often considered to be the most important part of a paper, as this is what will give the reader the desire to keep reading what you are offering to analyze. Consequently, your introduction should not consist in 2-3 sentences, but a significant paragraph where you will give some information about your topic and introduce the plan you are going to follow during your development.

The body of your text (or development) should consist in 3 main parts (4 should be the maximum). Here again, you should spend time explaining and developing each idea/aspect you are using in your essay. It is better to limit yourself to a few aspects and deal with them thoroughly rather than trying to include as many information as possible and treat them superficially. Again, your essay should not be about compiling facts, but about you trying to make a point to give the reader new and interesting information about a specific topic.

You need to finish your paper with a conclusion. Here again, this is an important part of your research, as it summarizes what you tried to point out during your development, and it also offers an opening for your topic. Consequently, your conclusion should not be expedited in a couple of sentences, but instead needs to be constructed and offer some interesting and new lines of thoughts regarding your topic (you can very well finish your paper by asking a couple of questions regarding what you have just established).

Here is what you should do before you start writing:

<b>Part</b>	<b>Goals</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	Gives some basic information regarding your topic and announce your plan
<b>Development</b>	3-4 different parts, each one dealing with a specific aspect of your topic. Make sure that all parts are similar in length.
<b>Conclusion</b>	Summarizes what you wanted to highlight in your development and offers some new lines of thought.

Note that I will pay special attention to see if you have been able to structure your paper following these guidelines.

### **Resources/bibliography**

You need to provide me with a 5-10-item bibliography. Remember that Internet resources should only represent a part of your bibliography and that you cannot only use resources written in English. Failure to respect these requirements will result in a lowering of your grade.

### **Quoting resources/bibliography**

You will need to respect some rules for quoting your resources and for typing your bibliography. So that everybody is on the same page, I am asking you to use the MLA style, which is one of the most commonly used one. The link I am providing you with will give you access to the website that gives you all the information you need to know. There is a lot of information on the website, but do not be overwhelmed by it; since your use of bibliographical resources for this research is quite basic, you will only need to follow a few specific guidelines.

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/06/>

## General remarks (grammar, style, vocabulary)

Since I am asking you to write a paper on a specific topic, I will pay attention to the quality of French you are using when I grade your essays. Before you hand me your paper, I am asking you to proofread your paper to make sure that you got rid of some basic mistakes in grammar and vocabulary. The basic mistakes I am asking you to pay attention to are:

- Errors in gender/number
- Errors in agreement
- Errors in spelling
- “Anglicismes” (if you are not sure about a word, please look it up in a dictionary, do not just try to “franciser” an English word!)
- Errors in syntax/grammar (for example, be careful when you use the structure “verbe conjugué + verbe à l’infinitif”; make sure that the syntax you are using is French, not English etc.)

When it comes to writing an essay in French, my advice would be to keep it simple. Do not try to make very long sentences, as you will probably lose track of what you are trying to say and you are more likely to make mistakes. Use grammar and structures you are comfortable with, do not try to write in French the same way you would in English. I prefer short and correct sentences rather than very long sentences full of grammar mistakes.

## Topics

### **#1: L’importance de la Nouvelle Vague.**

We discussed the emergence and impact of the New Wave on French cinema, but I only gave you some general information regarding this trend. If you choose this topic, your essay should investigate the following aspects:

- The social, political and economic context of French society when the New Wave emerged.
- Who were the most significant directors connected to the emergence of the New Wave? What were they against? What were they advocating?
- What is *Les Cahiers du cinéma*? Why did it play an instrumental part in shaping up the ideas of the New Wave?
- Why was *Les 400 coups* considered a landmark in the history of the New Wave? (Think of specific aspects of the film, both from a socio-economic and an artistic point of view.)
- How is the New Wave (or aspects of it) still relevant today? (You can use examples from the first two films you have watched to illustrate your ideas)

## **#2: Mieux comprendre le cinéma du réel.**

With *Je vais bien, ne t'en fais pas* and *Entre les murs*, we started discussing one significant aspect of French cinema, namely its desire to anchor its narrative in a realistic and clearly defined socio-economic context. As we saw, both films display examples of this concern, but in a distinct ways. If you choose this topic, your essay should investigate the following aspects:

- Define the visual style of both films.
- Define the socio-economic context of both films.
- What were the directors' intentions when directing these films? (You will need to find interviews of both directors)
- According to you, is one approach more pertinent/more efficient than the other? Why? (You will need to come up with specific examples from both films in terms of *mise-en-scène*. Remember to use the appropriate vocabulary connected to filmmaking and refer to the course website for specific elements connected to the analysis of the film image.)

### **Writing the first draft**

The first draft for the essay is due **Tuesday, March 5<sup>th</sup>**.

I am not asking you to have your entire essay entirely written on that day. What I am asking you to do for the first draft is:

- Have some specific ideas of what you will include in each part of your essay (cf. the introduction, the development and the conclusion.) This doesn't have to be written in a narrative way (but you can do so if it is easier for you). You can have some bullet points where you will clearly explain: (a) what you will talk about (b) the examples you will use to back up your comments.
- Have some bibliographical entries ready (between 3 and 4).