

FALL 2014: HISTORIES OF WATER

Film & Media Studies 35 & History 61
Swarthmore College

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Office Hours - Tuesday 4:30-5:30 pm

TTh 2:40-3:55 pm, Trotter 203 or Kohlberg 326
Screening: Thursday 7-10 pm, LPAC 101

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Office Hours - Tuesday 11:30 -12:30 pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Does the subject of water reveal history at its most cinematic, and film at its most historical? What does a water-centered history look and sound like? How might we question linear narratives of human progress through the subject of water and its range of archives? How can we experiment with received narratives of history through our own acts of making and documenting? Can the history of water be told in a mode other than that of crisis?

Film and history are narrative forms, which have both been challenged - creatively and analytically - by the subject of water, its politics and its poetics. This course explores the written and filmic histories of water through analytic as well as artistic practice. Students study and/or practice various film production approaches (the film essay, found footage film, the dramatic narrative, and the experimental documentary) in order to explore topics ranging from the history of climate and climate change denialism; the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Ocean worlds from the pre-modern to modern eras; and 20th century water politics and environmental justice.

The film production assignments include three collaborative documentary projects. Students learn fundamental skills in documentary filmmaking, (e.g., archival research, camera technique, digital audio recording, interview methods, and post-production editing), while thinking through the connections between local waterways and our understanding of history. The written history assignments include a primary source analysis and a short paper on California Water History from a suggested list of topics, including components of historiographic and primary source analysis. At all times, we proceed with the assumption that film and history are both narrative forms, challenged in similar and different ways by the subject of water.

CLASS STRUCTURE

Tuesdays/Thursday Afternoons: The afternoon class structure changes every two or three meetings. They may involve **discussions** on writings and films, **workshops** on film production, OR project **critiques/presentations**. We also view short films that are not publicly distributed. Our regular classroom is Trotter 203, but at times we'll meet in Kohlberg 326.

Thursday evenings: Feature-length films are screened on Thursdays at 7 pm in LPAC 101 (LPAC Cinema). Some films are on reserve at McCabe Library. A few films are not publicly distributed (noted on syllabus), nor can we provide private copies.

CLASS TENETS AND EXPECTATIONS

Best Filmmaking Practices

We have to maintain the highest level of professional integrity for the film and toward everyone involved in the film. The three most important practices of a filmmaker are:

- People skills: Practice good communication & appreciate people who help!
- Creativity: Be resourceful and flexible within pragmatic limitations!
- Preparation: Create a plan, make a budget, learn the camera, check your batteries, scout locations, do some tests, do the research, reserve a van, etc.

Mobility and Transportation

- The documentary film projects require mobility and resourcefulness. You may need access to a car for locations scouts and shoots. Make connections with people who drive or have cars. Otherwise, creatively use public transit.
- The screening of *Lordville* directed by Rea Tajiri occurs on **Tuesday, September 9**, off-campus in West Philadelphia. You will travel independently to I-House (<http://ihousephilly.org/>) via Septa or carpool. Make arrangements to attend, and if you have a conflict, let us know immediately.
- For the first project, your group must visit Fairmont Water Works (<http://fairmountworks.com/>) in Philadelphia by **Sunday, September 14**.
- Septa Independence Passes are available for students to go into the city anytime after 9:30am. It will take you anywhere SEPTA travels. Please see Jen Moore (jen_moore@swarthmore.edu), Administrative Assistant in the Department of History in Trotter 209, to pick up a pass. Note that we cannot reimburse you for public transit or gas/mileage expenses, so plan ahead.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS STATEMENT

If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact Leslie Hempling in the Office of Student Disability Services (Parrish 113) or email lhempli1@swarthmore.edu to arrange an appointment to discuss your needs. As appropriate, she will issue students with documented disabilities a formal Accommodations Letter. Since accommodations require early planning and are not retroactive, please contact her as soon as possible. For details about the accommodations process, visit the Student Disability Service website at <http://www.swarthmore.edu/student-life/academic-advising-and-support/student-disability-service.xml>. You are also welcome to contact us, Professor Cho and Professor Azfar, privately to discuss your academic needs. However, all disability-related accommodations must be arranged through Leslie Hempling in the Office of Student Disability Services. Note that some material covered in this course may have challenging content (e.g., depictions of violence). If you have a disability related to the viewing of materials with specific content, take steps to arrange an appointment and Accommodations Letter with the Office of Student Disability Services.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Three Collaborative Film Production Projects: (40%)

Each documentary film project will be formally presented and critiqued in the class. These are 5% of each project grade, so attendance is critical. Your group's performance is evaluated by how well you prepare and by your ability to listen to and engage constructive feedback.

- 10% - *Video Map*: 3-minute documentary

- 15% - *Sound Guide*: 3-minute documentary
- 15% - *Things Found*: 5-minute essay film

California Water History Paper: (30%)

- 10% - *Primary Source Analysis with "Salton Sea Real Estate DVDs"*: 3-page paper, including components of historiographic and primary source analysis
- 20% - *Research Paper*: 5-7 page paper on California Water History from a suggested list of topics, including components of historiographic and primary source analysis

Attendance and Participation: (20%)

- Participation includes short assignments (Study Questions, Viewing Sheets, Reflection Papers, and/or Production Workshop Exercises)
- More than three absences will lower your grade significantly. Missing 6 classes or more will be grounds for a failing grade in this course.

Work Ethic: (10%)

- Responsibility, Resourcefulness, Collaboration, Positive Attitude
- Regular tardiness will count as absences.
- Extensions for assignments may be granted, but only if requested at least three days in advance.
- You will receive credit for late work submissions, but the grade will be marked down by a +/- Letter Grade for each day it's late.

FILM PRODUCTION PROJECTS

I. Video Map (9 min. / 3 sites [3 min. each group]) / **Due: October 2**

Students work in groups and as a class to create a non-narrative documentary about the Philadelphia-area water system that is visually modeled after the short film, *The Seaman* directed by Bouchra Khalili.

- Step one: Visit the *Fairmount Water Works* by Sunday, September 14 to familiarize yourself with the water infrastructure of the Philadelphia region and in your small group, choose one waterway (i.e., creek, stream, river) in the region. You will present an in-class report on your group visit to Fairmount Waterworks on Tuesday, September 16.
- Step two: Your small group researches this waterway and selects one site along it that in some way "maps" its history. You might consider the uses of the water in connection to people, wildlife, the environment, industry, and/or city or regional planning. Your group's film segment should consist of a 3-minute series of tripod-mounted static shots and ambient sound taken directly from the site, due Thursday, October 2- with titles and end credits. We will edit the three pieces into a single, 9-minute *Video Map* triptych with title, inter-titles, and credits in class on Tuesday, October 21, and present the final piece on Thursday, October 23.

II. Sound Guide (9 min. / 3 interviews [1 interview per group]) / **Due: November 20**

Students work in groups to create a revised version of your *Video Map* that incorporates a soundtrack consisting of oral interviews.

- Step one: To find your interview subjects (1 subject per group), first examine your in-progress *Video Map* and develop a list of possible interviews that can expand your project's connection to the concept of *invisible labor* by Thursday, October 9. Who are (or were) the often unacknowledged human actors involved in the uses and functions of your waterway? The interviews can be oral history interviews or interviews of people with knowledge relevant to your sites. Remember to research and thoroughly prepare for your interviews, following the professional guidelines provided in class. The interview must be scheduled and confirmed by Thursday, October 23.
- Step two: Record one audio interview per site, and transcribe the entire interview by Tuesday, November 18, and earlier if possible. Your final segment should consist of an edited audio interview soundtrack beneath your *Video Map* – with titles and end credits, due Thursday, November 20. We will edit the groups' segments into a single, 9-minute *Sound Guide* with title, inter-titles, and credits on Tuesday, November 25.

III. Things Found (5 min.) / **Due: December 9**

Students work in groups to create an essay film that incorporates "found footage" with media from their *Video Map* and *Sound Guide* projects.

- Step one: Examine the visuals and the interviews from your *Video Map* and *Sound Guide*, and use them as inspiration for a new essay film that will include 1-3 examples of found footage. The found footage can be sourced from institutional archives, internet archives, completed films, or other found media sources. Obtain the highest-quality media format of the found footage. Your group will present progress reports on your archival research on Tuesday, November 25.
- Step two: Edit the material into a compelling sequence, making use of inter-titles -not voiceover- to structure the piece into a 5-minute essay film. For the visuals, use footage from your *Video Map* project and 1-3 examples of found footage. For the soundtrack, use the ambient sound recorded for *Video Map* and the oral interviews recorded for *Sound Guide*. You may also use music in your soundtrack, but be wary of music that is lyrically overwrought. Your final piece should have balanced levels of image and color (and sound), with title, inter-titles, and credits, and is due on Tuesday, December 9.

CALIFORNIA WATER HISTORY PAPER

Much of this course will focus on the history of water in California. One of our assignments will require you to provide a historical analysis of an early 20th century film promoting the Salton Sea as a tourist destination. The assignment will proceed in two steps: a primary source analysis of the Salton Sea Tourist film (around 3 pages), and a longer paper (5-7 pages) which will build on that analysis by examining more primary sources about the Salton Sea and/or other aspects of California water history. We will provide you with a packet of primary sources

but, should you have interest in other topics, we will encourage you to meet with us and Sarah Elichko (the Social Sciences librarian) at least two weeks in advance. See appendix for further details on "Analyzing Primary Sources."

I. Primary Source Analysis (3 pages) / Due: October 30

Your first assignment will be to analyze the Salton Sea tourist film, situating it in what you have read about the history of water in California. Draw also upon analytical and interpretive techniques used by historians whose work we have studied thus far in the course. Each of you will present a brief (approximately 5 minute) version of your analysis to the class on Thursday, October 30. On this day, we will give you a set of prompts that will suggest how to span out of the primary source analysis into a more formal paper.

II. California Water History Paper (5-7 pages) / Due: November 13

Your analysis from the first assignment will raise questions that you will explore in the longer 5-7 page paper that you will turn in on Thursday, November 13. In writing the longer paper, you won't just be adding 3-4 pages to your primary source assignment; you will take what you have learnt from that assignment and the class discussion to produce a short history research paper. In other words, the longer paper is not just lengthier but also more formal and conventionally structured. You will engage with at least one additional scholarly article and one additional primary source. At every stage, you should follow the guidelines provided in "Analyzing Primary Sources", which is an appendix to this syllabus. You will be provided with a packet of primary sources, but should you wish to expand beyond the Salton Sea, you should let us know by October 25th and make an appointment with Sarah Elichko, the Social Sciences librarian at McCabe (selichk1@swarthmore.edu, #5786)

MOBILE MEDIA WORKSHOP / Saturday, November 15, 10 am-3 pm

[Limited enrollment, starting on October 24]

This workshop will teach student participants how to use smartphones to create and share stories about pollution in the Delaware River as part of the *Troubled Waters* Mellon Creative Residency with filmmaker jesikah maria ross project. Participants will learn the fundamentals of recording good sound, taking compelling images, and writing engaging comments via smartphones, as well as learn how to post their multimedia products (audio stories, photos, written commentaries) directly to the Troubled Waters Tumblr site. The result will be a collaborative documentary work, produced in one day and located on the Tumblr site. In the workshop, students may share responses to the existing Troubled Waters Tumblr site, offer personal stories, and propose views on politics, pollution, and place re: the Delaware River; generating work in collaboration with and in response to the previous work done for the project. The workshop will begin with a morning training session (10am-12pm), followed by a field trip (12pm-3pm). During the field trip, we will go out on the Delaware River either by boat or on kayaks, led by the Delaware River Network; and students will use the time to create their media for the site.

FMST 35 / HIST 61 – HISTORIES OF WATER SCHEDULE

Week 1	TUE 9.02	<u>Introduction to the Course</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ <i>The Seaman</i> (dir. Bouchra Khalili, Germany, 2012, 10 min.) [Not on Reserve]○ <u>Assign: Project 1 - Video Map</u>
	THU 9.04	<u>The Narrative Dramas of Film and History</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ <i>Kolam / Pool</i> (dir. Chris Chan Fui Chong, Canada/Malaysia, 2007, Indonesian, Acehnese & English w/English Subtitles, 12:50)○ <i>When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts</i> (dir. Spike Lee, US, 2006, 255 min.)○ Timothy Corrigan and Patricia White, "Telling Stories About Time: Narrative Films," "Representing the Real: Documentary Films," <i>The Film Experience: An Introduction</i> (2012), 215-254, 255-284. <p><u>Screening in LPAC Cinema, 7-10 pm</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ <i>Trouble the Water</i> (dir. Carl Deal, Tea Lessin, US, 2008, 93 min.)
Week 2	TUE 9.09	<u>Crisis at its Limits</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Ruth Morgan and James Smith, "Premodern Streams of Thought in Twenty-First-Century Water Management" in <i>Radical History Review</i>○ Eric Loomis, "The Global Water Crisis: Privatization and Neocolonialism in Film," <i>Radical History Review</i> (Spring 2013), 189-195 <p><u>Special Screening at I-House in Philadelphia, 7 pm, Director in attendance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ <i>Lordville</i> (dir. Rea Tajiri, US, 2014, 67 min.) [Not on Reserve]
	THU 9.11	<u>Nature-Writing as Historical Narrative Style</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ John McPhee, "A Narrative Table of Contents," and "The Delaware Water Gap as a Fragment of the Appalachians," <i>Annals of the Former World</i> (2000) 5-14, 147-209. Pay special attention to pages 182-209 but read it all to get the right context.
Week 3	TUE 9.16	<u>Cinematography Workshop [Meet: LRC - Kohlberg 326]</u>

- **Due: In-class reports on Group Visits to Fairmount Waterworks**
- Workshop: Cinematography and Camera Technique

THU 9.18

Mediterranean Water Worlds

- Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, "The History of Rain and Fine Weather," in *Histories*, eds. Jacques Revel and Lynn Hunt (New York: The New Press, 1995), 202-216
- Fernand Braudel, "The Heart of the Mediterranean: Seas and Coasts," and "The Atlantic Ocean," in *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (1949), 103-137, 224-230

Week 4 TUE 9.23

Secret Histories of Water

- Excerpt from Muhammad Ibn Husayn al-Karaji, *Treatise on the Extraction of Hidden Waters* (medieval treatise translated into English), translated by Abigail Schade, *Hidden Waters: Groundwater Histories of Iran and the Mediterranean* (Unpublished dissertation, Columbia, 2011)
- Leucha Veneer, "Dissertation Abstract: Groundwater Histories of Iran and the Mediterranean" <http://dissertationreviews.org/archives/4226>
- Mandana E. Limbert, "The Senses of Water in an Omani Town." *Social Text* 19, no. 3_68 (September 1, 2001): 35–55.

THU 9.25

Post-production Workshop [Meet: LRC - Kohlberg 326]

- Workshop: Using Premiere Pro for film editing

Screening in LPAC Cinema, 7 pm

- *The Forgotten Space* (dir. Allan Sekula & Noël Burch, 2010, 112 min.)

Week 5 TUE 9.30

The Labor of Water

- Noël Burch, "Essay Film" and "Notes for a Film," *Notes on The Forgotten Space* (2010). Web. <http://www.theforgottenspace.net/static/notes.html>
- Sukhdev Sandu, "Allan Sekula: Filming the Forgotten Resistance at Sea," *The Guardian* (April 2012). Web. <http://www.theguardian.com/film/2012/apr/20/allan-sekula-resistance-at-sea>
- Jennifer VanderBurgh, "Explaining the Notion of the 'Essay Film,'" *A Film About the Sea: Notes on Allan Sekula and Noël Burch's The Forgotten Space* (2012), 31-35.
- Timothy Corrigan, "Of Film and the Essayistic," *The Essay Film: From Montaigne, After Marker* (2011), 3-13.

THU 10.02

Video Map Critiques

- **Due: Project 1 – Video Map (3-minutes)**
- Assign: Project 2 - Sound Guide

Screening in LPAC Cinema, 7 pm

- *A Dream of Iron* (dir. Kelvin Kyung Kun Park, 99 min, USA/Korea, 2014) [Not on Reserve]

Week 6 TUE 10.07

Sounding the Pacific

- Matt Matsuda, "Civilization without a Center," "Traditions of Engagement and Ethnography," "Repairing Legacies, Claiming Histories," *Pacific Worlds: A History of Seas, People, and Cultures* (201), 9-22, 256-274, 355-378
- Ryan T. Jones, "Running into Whales: The History of the North Pacific from Below the Waves," *The American Historical Review* (April, 2013), 349-377

THU 10.09

Audio Recording and Oral History Interviews

- "Oral History," *The Writing Center at the University of North Carolina*, <http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/oral-history/>
- Workshop: Oral History Interviews
- **Due: List of Possible Interviews for Sound Guide**

FALL BREAK – 10.11-10.20

Week 7 TUE 10.21

String-out of Video Map / Reading Primary Sources

- In-Class String-out of Video Map Triptych
- "How to Read a Primary Source," www.bowdoin.edu/writingguides/primaries.htm
- Assign Paper 1: Primary Source Analysis on Salton Sea DVDs (3-5 pages)

THU 10.23

Video Map Presentations with jesikah maria ross

- **Present: Project 1 - Video Map**
- **Due: Locked Schedule for Sound Guide Interview**
- Mellon Creative Resident and documentary filmmaker jesikah maria ross will present the Spring 2014 Troubled Waters project and associated projects (Restore/Restory, IDMF/Gulf Coast project, Maquilapolis).

Screening, LPAC Cinema, 7 pm

- *Plagues and Pleasures on the Salton Sea* (John Waters, US, 2006, 73 min.)

[FRI 10.24

Mobile Media Workshop Enrollment Begins]

Week 8 TUE 10.28

Strange Truths of the Salton Sea

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clara Jeffrey, "Go West, Old Man: Where the American Dream Goes Down the Drain", <i>Harpers Magazine</i> (2002)
THU 10.30		<u>Primary Source Analysis Presentations</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Due: Writing 1 - Primary Source Analysis with "Salton Sea Real Estate DVDs" (3 pages) ○ 5-minute presentations <u>Screening, LPAC Cinema, 7 pm</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Chinatown</i> (dir. Roman Polanski, US, 1974, 130 min.)
Week 9	TUE 11.04	<u>The Narrative Inundations of Los Angeles</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Joan Didion, "Holy Water", <i>The White Album</i> (1979) http://www.pbs.org/pov/thirst/special_holywater.php ○ Mike Davis, "The Dialectic of Ordinary Disaster," <i>Ecology of Fear: Los Angeles and the Imagination of Disaster</i> (1999), 3-56
	THU 11.06	<u>Found Footage and the Archive</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jamie Baron, "History, the Archive, and the Appropriation of the Indexical Document," in <i>The Archive Effect: Found Footage and the Audiovisual Experience of History</i> (New York: Routledge, 2014), 1-15 ○ Leo Goldsmith, "Recycled Programs: Rick Prelinger and the Meta-Archival Documentary," in <i>Moving Image Source</i>. Ed. Dennis Lim. 2011. Museum of the Moving Image. 17 August 2011. ○ <u>Assign: Project 3 – Things Found</u> <u>Screening, LPAC Cinema, 7 pm</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Found Footage Films [TBA]
Week 10	TUE 11.11	<u>Sourcing Media Workshop [Meet: LRC - Kohlberg 326]</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Workshop: Sourcing Media and Archives [Bring one DVD to class]
	THU 11.13	<u>California Water History Paper Presentations</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Due: Writing 2 – California History Water Paper (5-7 pages) ○ 5-minute presentations <u>Screening, LPAC Cinema, 7 pm</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Even the Rain</i> (dir. Icíar Bollaín, Spain/Mexico/France, 2011, 103 min.)
	[SAT 11.15	<u>Mobile Media Mobilizing Workshop (10 am – 3 pm)]</u>
Week 11	TUE 11.18	<u>Even the Rain and Bolivian Water Wars</u>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Nicole Fabricant and Kathryn Hicks, "Bolivia's Next Water War: Historicizing the Struggles over Access to Water Resources in the Twenty-First Century", <i>Radical History Review</i> (Spring 2013), 130-145 ○ Due: Transcription for Sound Guide Interview
	THU 11.20	<u>Sound Guide Critiques</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Due: Project 2 – Sound Guide (3 minutes)
Week 12	TUE 11.25	<u>String-out of Sound Guide / Things Found Meetings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In-Class String-out of Sound Guide Triptych (9 min.) ○ Due: Group Progress Reports on Things Found
	THU 11.27	<u>No Class (Thanksgiving Holiday)</u>
Week 13	TUE 12.02	<u>Things Found Post-production</u>
	THU 12.04	<u>Things Found Post-production</u>
Week 14	TUE 12.09	<u>Things Found Critiques</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Due: Project 3 – Things Found (5 minutes)

HISTORIES OF WATER - APPENDIX

SWARTHMORE ITS AND MEDIA SERVICES

- Language Resource Center, Kohlberg 326 / See website for hours.
<http://www.swarthmore.edu/language-resource-center>
A flexible learning space with Apple computers, scanners, printers. They provide support in video editing and scanning. Check out lightweight HD cameras, microphones, tripods, and digital audio recorders. Stop by the LRC or make an appointment with LRC Technologist Alex Savoth (asavoth1@swarthmore.edu).
- Media Services, Beardsley Hall 115 / See website for hours.
<http://www.swarthmore.edu/information-technology-services/media-services>
Check out camera, tripods, lenses, sound recording equipment, lights, speakers, microphones, and more. To reserve equipment, email (avbox@swarthmore.edu), or phone (x6201 / 610-957-6201) **24 hours** in advance!
- Media Center, Beardsley 114 / 24-hour access to students in this course
<http://www.swarthmore.edu/information-technology-services/media-center>
A technology facility with Apple computers, 3D printing, video/audio editing, scanning, color printing. For help with video/audio editing, drop by or make an appointment with Media Center Coordinator Jeremy Polk (jpolk1@swarthmore.edu),
- McCabe Library Computer Lab, McCabe 306 / See hours posted outside door.
<http://www.swarthmore.edu/libraries/mccabe-library>
Equipped with printers, scanners, and Apple computers.

LOCAL AND ARCHIVAL RESOURCES

- Fairmount Water Works
<http://fairmountworks.com/>
Philadelphia Water Department's Watershed Education Center
- The History of Philadelphia Watersheds and Sewers
<http://www.phillyh2o.org/>
by Adam Levine, Historical Consultant, Philadelphia Water Department
- Temple University Urban Archives
<http://library.temple.edu/scrc/urban-archives>

The Urban Archives document the social, economic, political, and physical development of the greater Philadelphia region throughout the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries. The collection includes 4 million images and 7 million news clippings from the *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, local TV newsreel footage from KYW and WPVI and an additional 100 photographic collections from various organizations.

- Philadelphia City Archive
<http://www.phillyhistory.org/PhotoArchive/Home.aspx>
The City's photo archive contains over 2 million photo records that date from the late 1800's. This web site contains a growing collection of those photos.
- The Internet Archive
<https://archive.org/>
The Internet Archive is a 501(c)(3) non-profit founded to build an Internet library. It offers permanent access for researchers, historians, scholars, people with disabilities, and the general public to historical collections that exist in digital format.

ONLINE RESOURCES FOR FILM LANGUAGE

For students unfamiliar with the fundamentals of film language, review and reference these online guides:

- Yale Film Analysis Guide
<http://classes.yale.edu/film-analysis/>
The Film Analysis Guide was developed to meet the needs of faculty and students who are interested in becoming familiar with the vocabulary of film studies and the techniques of cinema.
- The Columbia Film Language Glossary
<http://ccnmtl.columbia.edu/projects/filmglossary/index.html>
The Film Language Glossary provides definitions of essential terms used in basic and advanced film courses that are representative of all the major categories of film studies: practical terminology, technical terminology, the language of business, and historical terms, as well as the language of criticism and theory.

ANALYZING PRIMARY SOURCES

The primary source is the raw ingredient of all historical knowledge, but its meaning is never transparent. There are many different ways to interpret such primary sources, and a multitude of ways to be creative in the process. In some instances, you may want to tell a story; in others, you might comment on the language employed in the document (in this case, a film); while in yet other cases your interpretation might emerge from an attempt to assess motivation, intent, or purpose. However, simply describing what happened will never be sufficient as a historical interpretation of a document.

Interpretation involves two analytic processes because historians are always trying to discover both the meaning and the significance of any piece of historical evidence. Thus your primary

source analysis paper (Writing Assignment #1) should seek to expose the meaning of the film and uncover its significance. By meaning, we are trying to reconstruct how a document may have been understood by the historical actors in the era in which it was composed; by significance, we attempt to relate how that evidence contributes to a particular interpretation of the past. A good document analysis paper will therefore focus upon both the text itself (with attention to the specifics and nuances of language used) and the context (the broader history of the period that informs the document).

Based on Mark Kishlansky, "How to Read a Document" in Sources of the West (1995):

Documents can be analyzed on many levels and asked to answer a number of questions. Not all of what follows will be useful with every document, but in general the following questions are useful and will cover virtually all of what you can get out of a document. In what follows, I am using the word "document" in the broadest possible sense. In some circumstances, a painting or a piece of music might be a document, and so might a gun or a coffee cup.

Level One Questions: These are questions for which there are normally concrete answers. The document itself might answer these questions in a straightforward way, but the answers might also require some deeper thinking.

Who created this document?

This doesn't mean just knowing the name of the author, though that is important. It also means knowing something about the author, since who that person is will influence the content and meaning of the document. Think about what the author's identity might reveal about the deeper meaning of the source.

Who is the intended audience?

Audience shapes what we expect from a source, and knowing the relationship between the author and the intended audience can tell us a great deal about the source because it determines a whole set of rhetorical conventions that might have an impact on the credibility of the text and/or the need to look for hidden meanings.

What is the story line?

The story line may be a narrative, but it may also be details that don't form a story in the conventional sense. A diary entry may offer a conventional linear narrative, while a will does not – but the will still has a "story."

Level Two Questions: Now, you will probe beneath the surface. These questions still have essentially direct answers, and ones that can be ascertained in a fairly "objective" way. They are, however, questions that take you deeper into the source and sometimes between the lines.

When and Why was the document created?

Every source you will encounter was created for a purpose. What is it? Some possibilities (not an exhaustive list!) are: to persuade, to inform, to intimidate, to make something legal.

What type of document is this?

Genres have conventions – i.e., certain things that always appear (like beginning a letter "Dear —"). Knowing these is necessary for a secure understanding of the source.

What are the basic assumptions of this source?

All documents make assumptions that are connected to their intended audience – things that the creators know the audience will know without having to be told as well as things that have to be stated because they are central to the argument.

Level Three Questions: In these questions, you exercise your critical imagination – the exercise of thinking historically about your sources. These questions don't have definite answers and may produce answers from you that others will dispute.

Can I believe this document?

Do the assumptions, the rhetoric, etc. of this source undermine its credibility? Are there things that are believable even if other things seem not to be? What questions do I need to answer in order to feel comfortable trusting this source? Can there be more than one interpretation of the story or details within the document?

What can I learn about the society that created it?

This may be the most important question for historians. Every source reveals things that its creators never intended to reveal. It's not necessarily the case that it reveals things they didn't want us to know – merely that we can see things with hindsight and a different perspective that they didn't realize they were telling us about them.

What does the source mean for my research topic?

This is the great "So what?" question. Now that you have decoded this source, what difference does it make? Have you learned anything useful from it? What will you (or could you) do with what you have learned? Finally, you should think about what the document does not reveal and how you might go about trying to find out what this document fails to tell you.

Physical Appearance of Sources: If you are working with a facsimile, photocopy or microfilm of the original source, think about what the physical appearance and lay-out of the source reveals about it. For example: If it is a handwritten source, is the text "letter perfect" or are there corrections, erasures, interlinear notes, etc.? If it is a printed work, is it produced in a way that can give clues about the potential audience?

You might also take a look at the following for further guidance. "How to Read a Primary Source," www.bowdoin.edu/writingguides/primaries.htm