



Guidelines for writing papers

Academic year 2013-2014

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1. Introduction

This text establishes some ground rules for Doc Nomads students who are writing papers for the Master Degree Project (MDP) or for other courses.

Doc Nomads course leaders (professors, lecturers, instructors) may give guidelines - applying to their specific course unit - that are different from the rules established here. Otherwise all submitted papers must follow these guidelines. If a submitted paper does not follow them, it may be returned to the author for revision. A late-paper penalty may subsequently be charged.

Warning: unlike the papers Doc Nomads students are supposed to write, **these guidelines are neither an academic text nor an original piece of work.** To compile this document, we have copied/adapted fragments of similar guidelines.¹ In other words, when preparing this document, we have done the exact thing Doc Nomads students are not allowed to do when writing an academic paper.

2. Language and style

Papers should be written in English. Students are advised to use the automatic spell and grammar check provided by most software (choose English US or English UK).

Papers must be submitted as Microsoft word documents or as PDF files.

¹ Bain Jonathan (s. d.), *Guidelines For Writing a Philosophical Essay* (<http://ls.poly.edu/~jbain/paperguidelines.htm>, last accessed 7 September 2013); Capital Community College – Humanities Department (s. d.), *A Guide for Writing Research Papers Based on Modern Language Association (MLA) Documentation* (<http://www.ccc.commnet.edu/mla/index.shtml>, last accessed 8 September 2013); Penn Libraries (s.d.), *Plagiarism – What it is and how to avoid it?* (<http://gethelp.library.upenn.edu/guides/engineering/ee/plagiarize.html>, last accessed 8 October 2013)

3. Presentation

Begin with a title page containing the following information:

- The title of your paper
- Your family name and name
- The name of the course
- The Doc Nomads edition and semester you are in
- Your instructor's name

Example:

“Crumb” (1994), a documentary by Terry Zwigoff

Burton, Cliff

Documentary History 2

Doc Nomads edition 1, semester 3

Vande Winkel, Roel

4. Length

As a general principle, it is agreed that papers written for Doc Nomads course units should have a length of 2.000-4.000 words. This length includes references and bibliography. It is, as a rule of thumb, no problem to exceed the maximum length, in other words to write more than 4.000 words. However, it is not allowed to write less than 2.000 words.

The reflective essay paper, to be submitted as part of the dossier in the framework of the Master Degree Project (4th semester), should have a minimum length of 5.000 words, references included.

5. Structure - Content

The most important aspect of a paper is its structure. A paper may make several good points, but if it is not well-organized, these points will be obscured and over-looked. Divide your paper into sections, beginning with an introduction. Number each section and provide it with an appropriate section heading.

Example:

Title: Reassessing Robert Flaherty's "Nanook of the North" (1922)

1. Introduction
2. Robert Flaherty's life and work: a short introduction
3. "Nanook of the North": storyline
4. Production history
5. "Nanook's" aesthetics and visual style
6. How 'authentic' was "Nanook of the North"?
7. Conclusion
8. Bibliography

Always begin your paper with an introduction. An introduction is short and accomplishes two things. First, it tells the reader what the author's claims are. In other words: describe the topic you are going to discuss. This should take only a few sentences. Second, it tells the reader briefly and explicitly what will be said in each section of the paper to follow.

It may happen that you are not sure exactly what your claims are going to be, or the best way to organize and present them, until after you have written the paper. For this reason, it makes sense to write the introduction last.

The remaining sections of your paper (except the conclusion) should each make one clear point. It should be obvious, from the structure of your paper, how that point supports the thesis of your paper. Details belong in these sections, not in the introduction.

Use a conclusion only to provide a brief summary of what you have accomplished in your paper. It should be a reminder of what you have proved and how you have proved it.

Always add a full bibliography (see §6).

6. Bibliography

Your paper should always end with a **bibliography**: a list of all the sources you used. As explained below, such bibliographies or reference lists can be written in a variety of styles.

Example (in the *APA Published* style):

Austin, T. (2007). *Watching the World: Screen Documentary and Audiences*. Manchester - New York: Manchester University Press.

Kellner, D. (2005). The Media and the Election 2004. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 22(2), 178-186.

Kellner, D. (2010). *Cinema Wars: Hollywood Film and Politics in the Bush-Cheney Era*. Malden - Oxford - Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

Khatib, L. (2006). *Filming The Modern Middle East*. London - New York: I.B. Tauris.

Louise, S. (2010). Working-Class Hero: Michael Moore's Authorial Voice and Persona. *The Journal of Popular Culture*, 43(2), 368-380.

Porton, R. (2004). Weapon of Mass Instruction. Michael Moore's Fahrenheit 9/11. *Cineaste*, 29(4), 3-7.

Wikipedia (s. d.), *Michael Moore* (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_moore, last accessed 7 September 2013)

Please note that is customary to start with the family name of the authors and to rank everything alphabetically and (if the same author name appears twice, like Kellner in the example) chronologically.

Articles on websites are often anonymous and not dated (because they are regularly updated). In such cases, as demonstrated by the Wikipedia entry in the example above, we:

- mention the name of the website as the author
- write (s.d.) instead of the year of publication (s.d. is Latin for 'sine die' or without date)
- mention the day on which we visited this website for the last time (... last accessed....)

As the 'Michael Moore' example indicates, you are required to mention each page you visited. It is NOT enough to mention a website such as Wikipedia in general: you MUST specify the actual articles you used.

With the assistance of online information tools and library databases, we are able to access many newspaper or journal articles without actually laying our hands on those newspapers and journals. We simply download them as PDF files or in other electronic formats. In such cases, it is customary to mention bibliographic references of the original article. Whether you

actually held a printed copy of *Cineaste* in your hands (and read or Xeroxed one of the articles) or simply downloaded one of the articles through a database such as Academic Search Elite is not relevant to your readers. In both cases you refer to it without mentioning the database you used.

Example:

Porton, R. (2004). *Weapon of Mass Instruction. Michael Moore's Fahrenheit 9/11. Cineaste, 29(4), 3-7.*

There are of course various ways of organising a bibliographic entry. You can write the book title in bold or in italics, mention the city in which a book was published (or not) etc. You are free to adopt your own style, but must be consistent.

Example:

Inconsistent (wrong):

Logan, P. (2011). *Humphrey Jennings and British Documentary Film: A Re-assessment.* Farnham - Burlington: Ashgate Publishers.

Nornes, Abe (2003) **Japanese Documentary Film: The Meiji Era Through Hiroshima.** University of Minnesota Press, 320 p.

Why is this inconsistent and therefore wrong?

- The first entry does not spell the author's first name in full (only the initial), writes the book title in italics and mentions the place(s) where the book was published AND the name of the publishing company. It does not mention how many pages the book counts.
- The second entry writes the first name in full, writes the book's title in bold, does NOT mention the location of the Publisher but DOES mention how many pages the book counts.
- Both styles (or other styles) are good, but you have to choose one style and use it consistently

Examples:

Consistent (good):

Logan, Philip (2011) **Humphrey Jennings and British Documentary Film: A Re-assessment.** Ashgate Publishers, 375 p.

Nornes, Abe (2003) **Japanese Documentary Film: The Meiji Era Through Hiroshima.** University of Minnesota Press, 320 p.

Otherwise structured, but consistent and therefore also good:

Logan, P. (2011). *Humphrey Jennings and British Documentary Film: A Re-assessment*. Farnham - Burlington: Ashgate Publishers.

Nornes, A. (2003). *Japanese Documentary Film: The Meiji Era Through Hiroshima*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

As a rule of thumb, keep in mind that a bibliography should allow your readers to go after the literature you are mentioning. So if you refer to a journal or newspaper article, it does not suffice to name the journal, you must also mention the year of publication, the page numbers of the article and (for journals) the volume number and preferably also the issue number or (for newspapers) the exact date of publication.

Example for newspaper articles:

Catsoulis, J. (2010, August 18). A Film Unfinished. An Israeli Finds New Meanings in a Nazi Film. *New York Times*, p. C1.

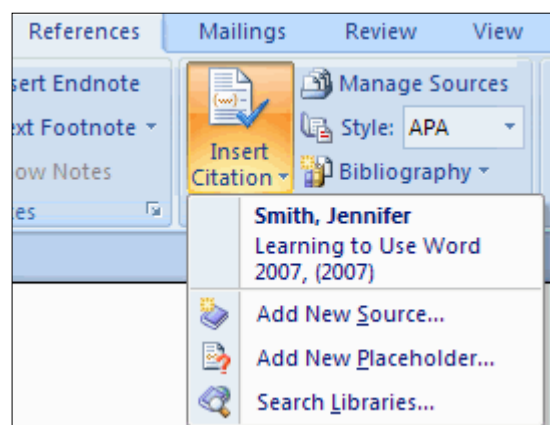
Margolis, J. (2005, 11 July). My life as a movie. *The Independent*, p. 8.

Example for journal articles:

Fuller, G. (2011). Searching for the Stamp of Truth: Claude Lanzmann reflects on the making of Shoah. *Cineaste*, 36(2), 16-19.

In this last example, the 'APA Published' bibliographic guidelines were used. "36(2), 16-19" stands for volume 36, issue 2, pages 16-19. But, as mentioned above, students are free to use their own system, provided they use it consistently.

Last but not least: Word processor software programs such as Microsoft Word (image right) allow you to credit/cite your sources in a particular style (like APA). The program first asks you to fill in the essential data (author's name, book's title etc.), then creates the source citation for you. It allows you to generate a bibliography of all the works you cited. It also creates a library of citations for you, which you can later on use for other papers. All of this comes in very handy if you struggle with consistently citing your sources in the same manner.



7. Plagiarism – citing sources

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence. Students found guilty of plagiarism will be awarded a mark of zero in the course. Most simply, plagiarism is intellectual theft. Any use of another author's research, ideas, or language without proper attribution may be considered plagiarism. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to refer to all your sources. The following paragraphs will show you how to proceed. If you have further questions, make sure to contact your instructors (see §11).

Even though you are adding a bibliography at the end of your paper, you are still supposed to refer to your sources in the actual text, especially when you are quoting (citing) or paraphrasing authors.

There are various ways to mention your source. For example, you can do so in the actual text:

In an interview, Nick Broomfield stated "... probably what interests me about documentaries is almost the opposite of someone like James Marsh, who makes carefully constructed films out of formal interviews and carefully crafted dramatic re-creations, like *Man on Wire*" (Quinn 2013: 62).

In this example, your text makes clear that you are citing p. 62 of an interview with Nick Broomfield. Your text also makes clear that this interview was published, in 2013, by someone named Quinn. If the reader wants to know more about this source, he should read your bibliography, which should mention:

Quinn, J. (2013). *This Much is True - 14 Directors on Documentary Filmmaking*. London: Bloomsbury.

Another way to refer to your source would be to use foot- or endnotes. Both follow the same principle: you add a note (your word processor can do this for you) at the bottom of your page (footnote) or at the end of your text (endnote) and refer to your source.

In the example above, the "quotation marks" make clear that you have copied some lines directly from a published source. Of course, you can decide to shorten the citation

In an interview (Quinn 2013: 61-74) Nick Broomfield spoke about his approach to documentary filmmaking. He distanced his personal style from "someone like James Marsh, who makes carefully constructed films out of formal interviews and carefully crafted dramatic re-creations, like *Man on Wire*" (Quinn 2013: 62).

In this example (above), the first reference makes clear that the entire interview is to be found on pages 61-74 from Quinn's book, but that the exact quotation can be found on page 62 (as mentioned in the second reference).

But you can also decide to rephrase the original lines. This way you summarise the content without actually citing it. This is perfectly alright. As a matter of fact, it is advised to paraphrase or summarize sources. Otherwise your text will read like a long, boring list of quotations. Nevertheless, please bear in mind that, **even if you are not verbatim copying text fragments, you are still (and always) supposed to refer to the original source.**

For example:

Nick Broomfield has developed its very own style and clearly distances himself from the approach of colleagues such as James Marsh (Quinn 2013: 62).

When reading a book or article, you may find an interesting "secondary source" that you are unable to access yourself, but would like to use. For instance, you read Jeffrey Geiger's book *American Documentary Film* (2011) and find, on p. 159, this passage about Jean Rouch:

Along with Vertov, Rouch was 'consciously synthesizing' Flaherty's methods in the creation of new cinéma-vérité (Rouch and Feld 1973: 99).

This makes clear that the author of the book (Geiger) is citing p. 99 of a book published by Rouch and Feld (in 1973). Suppose you like the notion of Rouch 'consciously synthesizing' Flaherty's methods, but are unable to read the original book Rouch and Feld wrote. In that case you write:

Rouch was 'consciously synthesizing' the working methods of Robert Flaherty (Rouch and Feld 1973: 99, quoted by Geiger 2011: 159).

As the example shows, your text makes clear that [a] you are citing p. 99 of Rouch and Feld, [b] have not read that actual book, but only a quote published by Geiger. At the end of your paper, your bibliography then mentions Geiger's book (which you have read) but not Rouch and Feld's book, for the simple reason that you have not read that title.

8. Criteria for evaluation

Doc Nomads course leaders (professors, lecturers, instructors) will give you specific requirements regarding their assignment(s). Students are expected to meet those expectations as good as possible and will be evaluated accordingly.

In general, each student is supposed to write an **original text**. In some cases, for example when you are asked to write a report about a film festival you attended, it may suffice to write down your own vision and thoughts. In other cases however, for example when writing papers for theoretical courses, you will be expected to **do research** and read academic and/or professional literature on your subject and to confront that information with your own thoughts and views.

It has been mentioned before, but is worth repeating, that **plagiarism is unacceptable** and will automatically lead to a mark of zero. Students found guilty of plagiarism will, like any student who received a mark below 10/20, have the opportunity to submit their paper again in the re-take exam period. Repeated plagiarism will lead to a definite mark of zero.

Every student is **required to meet the deadline**. If you submit your paper beyond the deadline, you will lose, for each day of delay, 10% of your score. In other words: if you are two days late, you will lose 20% of the grade you received for your paper.

9. Suggested style sheet

As mentioned on the previous pages, Doc Nomads students are free to decide the style in which they refer to their sources, provided they use the same style consistently. Again as mentioned above, most students will benefit from using the citation services that are provided by the software of word processors such as Microsoft Word.

Therefore, this style sheet just offers some examples (based on the 'APA published' style.)

Book (edited)	Aitken, I. (Ed.). (2013). <i>The Concise Routledge Encyclopedia of the Documentary Film</i> . New York - London: Routledge. MacKeogh, C., & O'Connell, D. (Eds.). (2012). <i>Documentary in a Changing Stat: Ireland since the 1990s</i> . Cork: Cork University Press.
Book (monograph)	Winn, J. E. (2012). <i>Documenting Racism. African Americans in US Department of Agriculture Documentaries, 1921-42</i> . New York - London: Continuum.
Book section	Kaufman, A. L. (2013). Shoah. In I. Aitken (Ed.), <i>The Concise Routledge Encyclopedia of the Documentary Film</i> (pp. 839-841). New York - London: Routledge.
Interview you conducted	Dardenne, J. (2014, 5 February). <i>Personal communication with the author</i> .
Journal article	Sakmyster, T. (1996). Nazi documentaries of intimidation: 'Feldzug in Polen' (1940), 'Feuertaufe' (1940) and 'Sieg im Westen' (1941). <i>Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television</i> , 16(4), 485-514.
Newspaper article	Margolis, J. (2005, 11 July). My life as a movie. <i>The Independent</i> , p. 8.
Online text (website)	Wikipedia (s. d.), <i>Michael Moore</i> (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_moore , last accessed 7 September 2013)
Online film or clip (website)	Youtube (s.d.), <i>Interview with director Julien Temple</i> http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=beAMNdoEazM , last accessed 1 October 2013)
Presentation, talk or Master class you attended	Ophüls, M. (2013, 8 November). <i>Masterclass given at the International Documentary Film Festival (Amsterdam)</i>

10. Filmography

You are likely to refer to many films in your text.

For example:

In the 1990s and in the beginning of the 21st century, the internationally most successful series about the Second World War were probably the BBC production *The Nazis: a warning from history* (1997 – historically advised by Ian Kershaw, who went on to write an acclaimed two-volume biography of Adolf Hitler) and several series that under the auspices of Guido Knopp were produced for German broadcaster ZDF: *Hitlers Helfer (Hitler's helpers, 1996)*, *Hitler's Krieger (Hitler's warriors, 1998)*, *Hitlers Kinder (Hitler's Children, 2000)*, *Holokaust (Holocaust, 2000)*, *Hitlers Frauen (Hitler's women, 2001)*, *Stalingrad* (2002) etc. In 2004-2005, the 60th anniversary of the end of the Second World War is worldwide commemorated with the launch of new documentaries (and fiction films).

Therefore, you may want to add not just a bibliography, but also a filmography. Such lists of films you have referred to are useful, but also complicated to produce, at least if you want to mention details.

It is fairly easy to limit yourself to mentioning:

- The name of the director
- The film's title [original title and/or the English translation]
- The year in which the film was premiered

For example:

Isaacs, M. (2009) *Men of the City*
Resnais, A. (1955) *Nuit et Brouillard (Night and Fog)*

You are free to add more information, like the name of the producer or the country of production, but will find that it is very hard to do this consistently, because many films are the results of the collaborative work of many persons and companies, often working from different countries.

11. Feedback

Specific questions about the paper you are writing for a particular course should be addressed to the professors/instructors who gave that assignment.

More general questions or feedback about these guidelines (which may be updated later on) can be sent to roel.vandewinkel@soc.kuleuven.be