1301 DOCUMENTARY FILM REVIEW RESEARCH PAPER

Watch the following documentaries. Select one to write about.
Citizenfour 2014 (available on YouTube ((free https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=djVwuYYikBU)) & Netflix); *The Hunting Ground*, 2015 (available streaming on Netflix & Itunes).

Each of these films creates an argument, whether implicitly or explicitly, and attempts to persuade you to believe in a particular position. Consider which of the appeals – pathos, ethos, and logos-- the film employs as strategies to sway you. For example, does the film score use romantically melodious violins or head jarring percussion (pathos)? If so, when and why? Are well-known authorities stating their views (ethos)? Does the film use significant amounts of data or facts (logos)? Which of the three appeals does the filmmaker use most often and why? Make sure you question the film's assumptions and not just buy its premise hook, line and sinker. Question the filmmaker's assumptions and methods of presentation.

The first step is to understand as fully as possible what the film is trying to say. Consider both the direct message it is sending and the image it is trying to create. Try to watch the film carefully several times. What are its central themes? What is its central conflict? What is at risk and what creates the tension in the film? Consider also the sound track, cinematography & lighting, the historical background, the film's organization and character development. Is the narrative chronological and sequential or does the timeframe shift from past to present? How does each of these filmmaking techniques contribute to the film's argument or become part of the pathos, ethos or logos used in the film?

Your task is twofold. You will write your own analysis of the film's argument and how the appeals contribute to its construction, AND you will also analyze HOW THE PUBLISHED REVIEWS represent the film and all that the film entails. Although you must be knowledgeable about the film, your essay should balance your interpretation and analysis with the **media sources' depiction** of the film, its themes and artistic techniques. Weave together your analysis of the film and compare or contrast your analysis with that of your sources. You may take a stance about the film or the essays, but you must support any stance you take with evidence from the film or the texts.

Locate three reviews of the film you've selected. **You must select articles from the following sources**: 1) a reputable film review online source 2) an article from a **foreign newspaper or magazine** and 3) an article from a **U.S. magazine or newspaper.**

Read each of your sources carefully. How does each source interpret the film? Does the article fairly represent it or does it take words or phrases out of context. Does the article explicitly or implicitly judge the film's contents or its intentions or honesty? If you hadn't seen the film, what would your impression be from the article?

Your essay will be more interesting if you seek sources that take varied, perhaps even extreme, stances. In other words, don't just use the first sources you find if they all take similar positions. In this essay, **you will also argue which of the sources you've selected most effectively and convincingly argues its points**. Of course, you must support your position. You do not have to agree with the author's biases or even to like the article in question to argue that it succeeds as a piece of rhetoric.

Consider the audience for the film and for each of your sources. This relationship is very important! An article written for *The Amarillo Armadillo* will have a different audience than *The New Yorker.*

Remember to analyze both the film and the articles. Don't get caught up in arguing for or against the film's ideas. Even as you argue (in third person) which author creates the strongest argument, you are not making a personal statement, but a claim based upon evidence from the text. You may need to use the rhetorical modes such as definition, compare/contrast, classification/division, cause/effect, exemplification and illustration to make your points clear. You will definitely be addressing the presence of pathos, ethos and logos in the film and in the reviews.

Create a Works Cited page with at least **four (4) entries**. This must be in alphabetical order and in correct MLA format. You may consult the MLA website. See link to this on the HCC Library website. Haul out your handbooks and Study Guide as references to creating in-text citations and entries for the Works Cited page. As you saw during the library orientation, many databases actually create the citation for you. Copy and paste this <u>in alphabetical order</u> into the correct place on your Works Cited page. Remember to cite the film itself.

As you read your sources and compare them to the film, you might ask the following:

- Is more than one viewpoint presented? What are these viewpoints? What are their similarities and differences?
- Are the viewpoints presented balanced or biased? If they are biased, what might be the basis for the bias? Where does the bias appear and how did you identify it?
- What are the underlying messages? To what extent are these messages cultural and to what extent might they be just the personal perspective of the writer?
- Do any of your sources succumb to stereotyping or do any of them address and question stereotyping?
- Is there any consistency in their views? Is there a common thread or do certain ideas or themes recur?
- Who is the audience for each of your sources? What is the relationship between audience and purpose for each source? How might the audience affect the author's approach to sending her/his message?

Assume your audience has seen the film; but since each of you will be working with different sources, provide background information and a brief summary of your sources. Effective papers will give sufficient, detailed, and effective evidence to the support each position.

Your **introduction** must include

- An interesting hook
- An informative thesis that thoroughly states the problem or issue
- A brief overview of each source and its position

The **body** of your essay must include

- Necessary definitions, background information, and historical perspective
- Analysis & comparison of the different perspectives revealed in the media sources with each analysis clearly & succinctly linked to your thesis
- Evidence from research materials correctly quoted and cited in MLA format
- Synthesis of the different perspectives into a qualified or contingent view of the issues you've raised
- A claim supported by evidence and logic about which article creates the most coherent and convincing or compelling argument

The **conclusion** must

- Tie together the major elements of the essay
- Not simply repeat the introductory comments
- Open the discussion
- Be as interesting as your hook

Consider carefully HOW you will organize this essay. For instance, will you organize according to the key themes the articles address, according to the journalist's biases, article by article, or according to the appearance of the appeals in the film and the articles' take on those appeals? Which organization will best serve your thesis?

FORMAT:

- MLA Guidelines: typed Formal Outline, Formal Paper, Works Cited Page
- Double spaced, 8 ½ x 11 white paper, 1" margins
- **1000-1500 words (5 to 7 pages). The word count does NOT include quoted passages.**

REFERENCES:

3+ Minimum secondary sources for the Annotated Bibliography typed.

4+ Minimum final primary (the film itself) & secondary sources (newspaper & magazine articles) used in paper and referenced in Works Cited Page. **Use sources from the library or the HCC databases only. You may NOT "google" or use Wikipedia or an encyclopedia.** Submit a photocopy of the full essay or text of your outside sources with your paper. **Highlight** the sections you use in your paper.

8+ Minimum references (paraphrases and direct quotations) to **primary** and **secondary sources** in the paper

Annotated Bibliography: Minimum **150 words per source**. (For each of the 3-4 Minimum Secondary Sources)

- Include full bibliographic information in MLA format
- Write a paragraph summarizing the source
- Write a paragraph evaluating the source and indicating how it might be used in your essay.

IN-CLASS CONFERENCE or PEER ANALYSIS: Bring your rough draft and works cited page along with any questions you have about the assignment for a 10-minute in-class conference or participate in a peer analysis.

Penalties:

- Failure to appear for a conference or peer analysis will result in **10 points off** the essay's final grade. (- **5 points** for being present + **5 points** for rough draft)
- Failure to submit Turnitin originality report with final draft (**5 points off** of final grade for essay)
- Late penalties are **5 points per CALENDAR day.**

The **major components** of this assignment consist of 1) research paper; 2) Works Cited page; 3) Annotated Bibliography; 4) copies of research articles with quoted passages highlighted; 5) Askonline download or your essay signed by a tutor from Northwest College Writing Center; 6)in corporation of tutorial comments; 7) Turnitin analysis.

SUBMISSION:

Place the following in a manila envelope large enough to hold:

- Final paper comprised of typed Formal Sentence Outline, Formal Paper, Works Cited Page, Annotated Bibliography in MLA format
- Approved thesis, drafts and worksheets, peer analysis
- Printouts and/or photocopies of outside sources cited with used passages highlighted
- For 5 points extra credit submit to Writing Center tutors (with signature) or AskOnline.net. Be aware that it can take up to 48 hours (2 days) to get your marked essay back from AskOnline. Download the marked essay. **Highlight and number at least three (3) corrections or comments** which the reader made and which you intend to correct on your final draft. Incorporate these suggested revisions into your essay. **Highlight** these corrections and provide the corresponding numbers on the final draft. In other words, suggestion "1" from the tutorial comments should match up with correction "1" on your final draft. You will not receive extra credit if you do not indicate and include tutorial corrections. In general, the more corrections you can work into your essay, the stronger and clearer the final work will be.
- Turnitin.com submission. Make sure you review your own submission and double check for any inadvertent plagiarism.
- Write your name on the outside of the envelope

Papers must be submitted with the proper MLA format, an approved thesis, all of the preparatory materials listed above, and **be of sufficient length to be accepted**. I WILL NOT GRADE INCOMPLETE PACKETS AND LATE PENALTIES WILL ACCRUE.

Grading Criteria: Your essay should

- Demonstrate understanding of analysis, comparison, and synthesis
- Demonstrate ability to research a topic and find credible, authoritative sources (see the "Researched Writing," section in the Study Guide)
- Effectively develop and support points with evidence from your sources—this evidence consists of specific details, quotations, and/or paraphrases that you explain/interpret/analyze adequately
- Exhibit logical and effective organization
- Demonstrate understanding of strategies for composing and revising
- Attempt to write with power, to write concisely, and to use clear and precise sentence-level rhetoric
- Integrate sources and adhere to MLA guidelines for documentation.

THERE IS NO REVISION OPTION AVAILABLE FOR THE RESEARCH PAPER.

KNOW YOURSELF. KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE. KNOW YOUR TOPIC.