

Writing Assignment—Scorsese Essay

In 1990, *Goodfellas* was nominated for the Academy Award for best picture, but lost the award to Kevin Costner's Native American epic, *Dances With Wolves*. Scorsese was overlooked at the Oscars for much of his career, actually, and it became a joke among directors, because Scorsese is also regarded by many of his peers and by critics as one of the most talented directors of his generation.

In 2006, *The Departed*, a story of corruption in Boston's underworld, won Scorsese the long-awaited Oscar.

You will have watched Scorsese's two films deemed most Oscar-worthy, *The Departed* and *Goodfellas*. Your job will be to determine whether the superior film, *The Departed*, won the award it deserved, or if Scorsese was robbed in 1990 and he actually won his first Oscar for an inferior product.

Your analysis should present specific criteria for judging which of these two films was most Oscar-worthy. You should focus only on dramatic and cinematic elements of these two films, and you should be as specific as possible. In other words, you can discuss cinematography or editing, you can discuss casting or use of setting; you may not say "Scorsese uses dramatic elements" and then give me a list of those elements. Then you should discuss why those elements are more effective in one film than in the other.

The focus of this paper will be the film that you believe is the better film between *The Departed* and *Goodfellas*. Your thesis should focus on why that film is superior and Oscar worthy. You should spend little time discussing why the lesser film is inferior or not Oscar worthy—that's beyond the scope of this particular paper.

In order to complete this assignment, you will need to look up at least two independent reviews of each film and cite at least two of those reviews correctly in your paper-- this means you will also include a works-cited page. These reviews will also give you a model for formatting.

You should write this paper in the format of a film review of 750-1000 words. You may determine number of paragraphs as makes sense to you, but multiple paragraphs are required, as are specific citations of dramatic and cinematic techniques at work in the winning film. Monoparagraphs will be returned immediately for a rewrite, and the time you take to rework the monoparagraph will count against your score.

See reverse for Scoring Guide. This scoring guide should be attached to your essay when you hand in your hard copy 10 SCHOOL DAYS after completion of the film IN CLASS. Turnitin.com copies should be submitted by this date as well.

A Range

- The MI provides a clear, strong statement of the author's position on the topic.
- The thesis statement names the topic of the essay and outlines the main points to be discussed.
- Includes 3 or more DIs (specific examples from scenes) that support the position statement. The evidence is based on specific dramatic and cinematic elements from the film.
- All of the DIs and examples are specific, relevant and explanations are given that show how each piece of evidence supports the author's position.
- Arguments and support are provided in a logical order that makes it easy and interesting to follow the author's train of thought.
- Structure uses the style of a film review and is sensibly organized into appropriate, multiple paragraphs within word count limit.
- Correct documentation of film title, director, release year, actors in all roles mentioned, with correct spelling of all proper names.
- All sources used for quotes, statistics and facts are credible and cited correctly.
- Author makes no errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.

B RANGE

- The MI provides a clear statement of the author's position on the topic.
- The thesis statement names the topic of the essay.
- Includes 3 or more DIs (specific examples from scenes) that support the position statement. The evidence refers to dramatic and cinematic elements in general terms.
- Most of the evidence and examples are specific, relevant and explanations are given that show how each piece of evidence supports the author's position.
- Arguments and support are provided in a fairly logical order that makes it reasonably easy to follow the author's train of thought.
- Almost all DIs and statistics are reported accurately.
- Structure does not use the style of a review OR is not sensibly organized into paragraphs OR does not meet word count limit.
- Correct documentation of film title, director, release year, actors in all roles mentioned, with correct spelling of all proper names.
- All sources used for quotes, statistics and facts are credible and most are cited correctly.
- Author makes 1-2 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.

C RANGE

- The MI is present, but does not make the author's position clear
- The thesis statement outlines some or all of the main points to be discussed but does not name the topic.
- Includes DIs (specific examples from scenes) that support the position statement. - - All evidence is general.
- At least one of the DIs and examples is relevant and has an explanation that shows how that piece of evidence supports the author's position.
- A few of the support details or arguments are not in an expected or logical order, distracting the reader and making the essay seem a little confusing.
- Most supportive facts and statistics are reported accurately.
- Structure does not use the style of a review AND is not sensibly organized into paragraphs OR does not meet word count limit.
- Correct documentation of film title, director, release year, actors in all roles mentioned, with correct spelling of all proper names.
- Most sources used for quotes, statistics and facts are credible and cited correctly.
- Author makes 3-4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.

D RANGE

- There is no MI.
- The thesis statement does not name the topic AND does not preview what will be discussed.
- Includes 1 or fewer DIs (specific examples from scenes).
- Evidence and examples are NOT relevant AND/OR are not explained.
- Many of the support details or arguments are not in an expected or logical order, distracting the reader and making the essay seem very confusing.
- Most supportive facts and statistics were inaccurately reported.
- Structure does not use the style of a review AND is not sensibly organized into paragraphs AND does not meet word count limit.
- Incorrect documentation of film title, director, release year, actors in all roles mentioned, with incorrect spelling of all proper names.
- Many sources are suspect (not credible) AND/OR are not cited correctly.
- Author makes more than 4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.

Cinematic
Elements

Goodfellas

The Departed

NAME the element

Cite Specific Ex.

Cite Specific Ex.

Scorcese Essay Worksheet

Dramatic
Elements

Goodfellas

The Departed

NAME the element

Cite Specific Ex.

Cite Specific Ex.

What Needs To Be Cited?

- ✓ **Direct Quotations.** Any time you quote word for word, you must include a parenthetical citation.
- ✓ **Indirect Quotations.** When you paraphrase (restate in your words) another writer's ideas, you must give him credit with a parenthetical citation.
- ✓ **Facts or Statistics that are not common knowledge.** Historical dates, general biographical information, general truths do not need to be cited. Specific information should be followed by a parenthetical citation.

Types of Citations

Direct Citations

These are **word for word** quotes from the author. These must be included in quotation marks, and must be followed by a parenthetical citation. The order for punctuation must be followed **exactly** as follows:

“Longfellow's last decades were uneventful, save for the fatal burning of his wife, which eventually led to her death,” (Baym 578).

It is important that you do not “close” the sentence with its ending punctuation until you have given the parenthetical citation. This way the reader knows who said this about Longfellow before the end of the sentence.

Indirect Citations

With indirect citations, you keep the author's basic *idea*, but you put it in your own words. You do not put indirect citations in quotation marks, because you are not “quoting” the author word for word. It is still important, however, to give the author credit for his idea, **so each indirect citation must be followed by a parenthetical citation.**

For example THIS is a direct quote:

In order to be clourophobic, one must, as a child, have experienced a traumatic clown encounter. Herring 39

To **indirectly cite** this author, you must take the main idea and put it in your own words:

There are many different causes listed for clourophobia. One major cause insists that the victim must have had a traumatic clown experience as a young child (Herring 39).

Note that the parenthetical citation still must come before the ending punctuation, just as with direct citations. This format must be followed exactly.

Extended or Long Quotes

If the information on is more than four typed lines, it is called an extended or a long quote. Long quotes must be treated differently.

- Long quotes are typed so that each line is double tabbed
- Long quotes are always direct (word for word)
- Long quotes do not need quotation marks; the indent at the start of each line indicates a direct quote
- The ending punctuation goes directly after the quote, before the parenthetical citation

Below is an example of a long quote in a paper:

Plays in Shakespeare's time were performed at a much swifter pace than what we would be able to follow. While most plays all consisted of five acts, they didn't take as long as would be expected.

The pace of a performance was rapid; Shakespeare's plays were put on in two hours. There was no scenery, no lighting, few props, and no curtain on the main stage. As a result, the action moved quickly from one scene to the next. (Akley 132)

There were also very few costume changes in Shakespeare's plays. The actors usually wore their own clothing.

Works Cited Page

Newspaper Articles

Bennigan, Jan. "When It Rains, It Pours." Chicago Tribune 8 April 1994: A14.

"Children Fail at Learning." Peoria Journal Star 30 March 1998: B14.

Newspaper or Magazine Article on the Internet

Andreadis, Athena. "The Enterprise Finds Twin Earths Everywhere It

Goes, But Future Colonizers of Distant Planets Won't Be So Lucky."

Astronomy Jan. 1999: 14 <<http://web.lexis-nexis.com/universe>>.