

Faculty Information Literacy Stipend Final Report

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Course: International Film History

Semester: Spring 2023

1) Introduction:

I decided to create this assignment because, in previous semesters, students had demonstrated underdeveloped skills in relation to historical research, and film historical research in particular. I therefore decided to develop a project in conjunction with this stipend which would enhance students' abilities in this area. One of the three objectives of the course (which shifted after the initial application for the stipend was submitted) was to use the research project to "understand some of the methods and processes through which history, and film history in particular, is researched and studied. Specifically, students will learn how historical narratives are constructed through source-based evidence." Obviously, the completion of the project did indeed serve to fulfill this goal. The other two main goals of the class involved gaining knowledge of cinema history outside the United States, and their influence on one another. This project helped fulfill the former goal and to a certain extent the latter, as all the films the students studied were from outside the US, and many students studied the reception of their film on the international market, thus its interaction with other film cultures.

The most crucial information literacy skill they gained from this project for the sake of the class was learning how to identify and evaluate the quality of primary and secondary sources, as well as consider their context, authority, and bias. That skill reinforced our discussions of the course reading materials (both primary and secondary), in considering the authors' perspective and bias. The skills they learned about how to navigate various research tools available through the SMU Libraries and beyond will also certainly serve them well in future classes, regardless of the subject.

Thus, the information literacy goals both reinforced the main objectives of the course and also set the students up for success in their future academic careers.

2) Description of the Information Literacy Assignment:

The information literacy assignment consisted of a research project on a specific film produced outside the United States before the year 1980. The assignment was split into 5 parts:

- In Part 1, students selected a film (list of options provided by the professor, no repeated films among the students), considered their existing knowledge and bias toward the film's country of origin, and then revisited their preconceptions after watching their film.
- In Part 2, the students produced a Research Plan, in which they devised a research question for their project and created an initial plan for how they were going to start that research.
- In Part 3, the students produced a short Secondary Source Annotated Bibliography, including a "Bad Source" to show that they could evaluate what made a given source good or bad.
- In Part 4, they produced a short Primary Source Annotated Bibliography, also including a "Bad Source." Both bibliographies had templates with specific questions to answer in each annotation.

- And in Part 5, the students produced either a Presentation to be given before the class, or a Research Essay to be read by me, both of which needed to reflect a cohesive historical narrative tailored to the audience in question.

3) Method of Assessment:

Artifacts Produced: Initial Film Report, Research Plan, Two Annotated Bibliographies (one for Primary Sources, one for Secondary Sources), Final Presentation or Research Essay.

Metrics of Assessment:

- Formatting (both the assignments themselves and the application of Chicago Style),
- Identifying scholarly secondary sources and primary sources that apply to their project,
- Analyzing the usefulness of those sources for their project specifically, and
- Synthesizing their findings into a cohesive historical narrative tailored to a specific audience. (The individual stages' rubrics, which are largely organized around these metrics, are included in the appendix.)

Demonstrated Learning: The students demonstrated their learning by the ease with which they understood the difference between a primary and secondary source by the final stage, and incorporated quality information from those sources into their projects.

Grades: The project was worth 40% of the course's overall grade. (Discussion of the strength of the projects in the next section.) The distribution of the grades across the five stages was as follows:

Stage 1: 2% Stage 2: 6% Stage 3: 8% Stage 4: 10% Stage 5: 14%

Stage 1 was graded by completion: if you turned it in and did an adequate job, you got the points. Stage 2 was graded on a Check (95%), Check Plus (105%), Check Minus (85%) scale. Stages 3, 4, and 5 were each graded out of 100 points, as guided by the rubrics specified in those stages' assignment sheets.

Student Satisfaction: In the midterm surveys and in the student-teacher conferences, many students expressed that they were learning a lot from the project, and that they hadn't had much experience with historical research before this class, and almost none had experience with film historical research.

4) Results and Impact on Student Learning:

Project Results:

Stages 1 and 2:

General Results: Students generally did well on these first two stages: some answers were more thoughtful than others, but overall they understood what was being asked of them and demonstrated their knowledge of their films and their initial ideas for how they would want to research them.

Rubric Results: Students lost points primarily for forgetting to fill out or skipping required portions of the report.

Stage 3&4:

General Results: These stages were perhaps the roughest of the project, despite how seemingly easy the assignments were. My guess would be students underestimated the amount of time and effort that would be required for these stages, and threw together what they could before the deadline.

Rubric Results: The biggest problems were related to not incorporating feedback, despite detailed instructions on how to correct their Chicago Style citations, or notes on what they had skipped. The students' analysis of sources generally good, although issues with not following instructions (e.g., answering the assigned questions, particularly "how does this source relate to your research question?") were persistent.

Stage 5:

General Results: I was particularly impressed with students' class presentations, which were overall well-organized and relatively well-researched. The level of research in the research essays was higher, but the overall quality of the project was somewhat lower.

Rubric Results: Students most frequently lost points for a lack of cohesive narrative or lack of overall argument, especially in the research papers.

Impact on Other Student Assignments:

The amount of time spent in class on this project naturally reduced the amount of time that could be spent on the lectures themselves. I considered, but ultimately chose not to include topics like Chicago Style Formatting in the class' exams, since the exams were intended to test their knowledge of the other lecture content outside of the research project. However, I might change that in future iterations of the project, for reasons that will be explored in the next section.

Student Opinions and Feedback:

As stated above, students generally seemed to enjoy the project, and stated that they learned a lot. They seemed to like that the project was clearly split into five stages, but often complained that we were spending too much time on the project in class. (My ideas for how to correct this are in the next section.)

Students did not comment much on the panoply of information pamphlets and other resources I had created for them, which leads me to believe that they simply did not use them to the extent that I had hoped.

Students did not seem to register that their final project was ultimately not worth much of their overall grade in the class (only 14%), and so several expressed surprise when their grades were not markedly improved by a good final project grade when they had turned in Stages 3 and 4 late or partially complete.

5) Summary, Next Steps:

Information Literacy Reflections:

This was my first time working with and incorporating information literacy into my course work, and I would definitely do so again. I thought that discussing the perspective of the sources and the potential bias they had was very useful in helping students to understand that historical sources are not full of wholly objective information that cannot be questioned, but real documents created by individual people. I also had never thought to teach students explicitly about what constitutes a good source, which the students seemed to understand and incorporate into their projects. Both of these information literacy skills I

absolutely plan on incorporating into future classes. I do plan on assigning this project as a whole again in future film history classes, although I do plan on incorporating a variety of changes, as detailed below.

Room for Improvement:

If and when I teach this assignment again, I would incorporate the following changes:

- I'd adjust the timing of the schedule. In the current iteration, they were asked to have a "student teacher conference" with me after Stage 2 and before Stage 5. Many students put off that meeting for most of the semester, which meant that there was little time for me to correct the trajectory of their project if they had poorly interpreted or incorporated my previous written feedback.
- I would include a more explicit and detailed explanation of what a research question is, and what makes a good one. I would also give feedback on their potential research questions earlier, and make them submit a final/revised one, as many students created research questions that were infeasible even after having been told to rephrase in a given way.
- I also think I was too ambitious my choices for film options. Too many students simply could not find adequate sources in English, and the project needed to be adjusted for them, or I had to go out of my way to personally guide them through their research, which does not bode well for their ability to conduct independent research in the future. In future iterations of this project I intended to choose more familiar titles, both for the students' sake and also for my own.
- The largest problem with this project was logistical: namely, the amount of work it took to grade all the individual stages and provide feedback on them. This course had 40 students and no TAs, and I doubt that in future classes I would have either a more reasonable class size or more help. As such, I will need to seriously rethink when and how I will give them feedback so that they are still being helped where need but I will be less overwhelmed and overtaxed by the end of the semester.

6) Appendix:

What follows is the initial assignment sheet the students were given: it covers all five stages of the project, including the rubrics for those stages. The students subsequently received individual assignment sheets for each stage with more extensive instructions and details, but for the sake of brevity I am including just this initial assignment sheet, as there were very few substantive changes between this initial sheet and the subsequent stage-specific sheets.

Student examples are not included, the report is being submitted after the conclusion of the semester, which precluded my ability to obtain permission with individual students for the sharing of their work.

International Film History Research Assignment FILM 2351, SMU Fall 2023, Professor Britta Hanson

General Assignment Description: Students will research the production context and international reception of a specific film significant to global film history. To do so, students will be required to use library resources to gather and analyze primary and secondary sources, and analyze the information therein.

Project Learning Objectives:

- Learn how to utilize film historical research methods and navigate research tools in order to locate historical sources.
- Learn to identify useful historical sources, with an understanding of their context, authority, and potential bias.
- Learn how to translate historical evidence into a cohesive narrative.

Why is this Assignment Important to this Class?

Historical research itself is too often framed as merely a question of memorizing facts and dates. This project will introduce us to the building blocks of history: namely, primary and secondary sources, in the context of film. Then, we will learn how to construct those unique sources into a cohesive historical narrative.

This project also gives the class the chance to explore international films beyond what is on screen, to the context of their original production and release. Students will have a chance to dig deeply into a given country or region's film industry, learning how it operated at that time, discovering the impact of its films on other film cultures.

More detailed instructions and a detailed assignment sheet will be given out for each stage.

Stage 1: Film Write-Up (due February 9 at 11:59 pm on Canvas)

The Assignment, in Short: Pick a Movie from the list, watch it, answer questions about your response to it and your initial thoughts about researching it.

Grading & Feedback: This is a very free-form, open-ended introduction to the topic, so Students will simply be graded on completing the activity rather than for the quality of their answers. They will be given feedback, but not critiqued in depth.

In-Class, Instructor-Led Work: *Film Selection:* The film list and the films therein will be introduced in class by Week 3.

Introduction to Film Historical Context: Students will be introduced to how to identify the ways in which a film can reflect the culture of its nation or region, as well as the specific industry in which it was produced. The instructor will also cover the overall biases of film history, and how they can affect the ways in which we as researchers perceive said films.

Student Work: Students will select a prominent international film (produced before 1980) from the list provided by the instructor. They will watch the film, and submit a response of at least 300 words that answers the following questions:

- 1a. *[Answer before watching the film]* What do you currently know (or assume) about this country, and specifically this country during the time period in which the film was produced?

- 1b. *[Answer after watching the film]* Did watching the film make you realize you had additional ideas about that country and its film industry during that period, either that you simply forgot to write down, or that you didn't realize you assumed? Did the film challenge or confirm any of your preconceptions, and how so?
2. How, before doing any research, do you think this film reflects the conditions of the film industry in which it was produced? *[More specific sub-questions under this category will be listed on the actual worksheet.]*
3. What does this film tell us, if anything, about the culture of the nation in which it was produced? Are the conditions of the national culture discussed or critiqued in the film, or is that context incidental to the plot? *[More specific sub-questions under this category will be listed on the actual worksheet.]*

Stage 2: Research Plan (due March 2 at 11:59 pm on Canvas)

Part A, Primary and Secondary Sources

In-Class, Instructor-Led Work, Part A: Professor Hanson will provide an introduction to the concept of primary and secondary sources, and how to identify them.

Part B: Professor Hanson will also provide an in-class workshop on proper citation: this may be combined with Part A, or moved to stage 3.

Student Work: After the in-class overview of primary and secondary sources, students will be given a worksheet (in-class or take-home) in which they need to identify which sources are primary versus secondary, and explain why they believe that in each case.

Part B, Utilizing Library Resources

In-Class, Librarian-Led Work: *Library Resource Workshop & Subject Guide*

Librarian de Verges has offered to lead an in-person workshop during one of our class periods discussing what library resources are available for film historical research, and demonstrating how students can use them. Students will be encouraged to set up individual research consultations with the librarian to receive additional assistance with their research, if needed.

Librarian de Verges has also generously agreed to produce a subject guide specifically for this research project. This guide, to be available on the SMU library website, will allow students to easily access the resources we've discussed whenever they are working on their project.

Student Work: *Part A:* After the in-class overview of primary and secondary sources, students will be given a worksheet in which they need to identify which sources are primary versus secondary, and explain why they believe that in each case.

Part B: Students will be asked to turn in Research Plan that contains their initial ideas for how they intend to research their film: what kind of history they intended to focus on in their research, what kinds of sources will they need for their specific film, and what databases/research contexts will they use to do so (as well as any specific ideas they have about how they will conduct that search).

Stage 2 Learning Goals: Students will learn the distinct types of sources, and then how to find those forms of information within the resources available to them.

Stage 2 Grading: Students' answers primary and secondary source resource will be marked correct/incorrect, but the overall worksheet will be graded on completion.

Research Plans will be graded check (95%), check plus (105%, top 5 or so plans), check minus (~83%). In addition, that assignment will be given detailed feedback on whether or not their research ideas are feasible.

Student-Teacher Conferences: Students will be asked to meet with the professor between Stage 2 and 4 in order to assess how the project is going, and to address any problems or sources of confusion Students may be having.

Stage 3: Secondary Source Annotated Bibliography (initial list of sources due March __ @ 11:59 on Canvas; final assignment due April 1, 11:59 pm on Canvas)

In-Class, Instructor-Led Work: *Part A:* Professor Hanson will provide an in-class mini-lecture about how to assess whether a given source is providing sufficiently useful information, and then how to succinctly summarize your observations within an annotated bibliography. Examples will be provided, and students will then practice creating an annotation for a sample source (which will be related to the film historical area being taught that week) in groups during class.

Part B: In addition, Professor Hanson will give a brief tutorial and provide instructive handouts on proper citation style in either MLA or Chicago Style, so that students' annotated bibliographies look polished and professional. An in-class activity allowing students to practice proper citations may follow, if time allows.

Student Work: *Part A:* Students will be asked to find four secondary sources that provide significant useful information related to the production process and context of their film. They will also find one "bad" additional "bad" (non-scholarly and non-authoritative) secondary source.

Professor Hanson will check this initial list to make sure that all the sources appropriate (i.e., the four "good" sources are both scholarly and containing sufficient material related to the film in question). If any sources are not appropriate, the student will be asked to replace them with a better source for the next step of the assignment. (The student will be free to check with Prof. Hanson in office hours or via email to make sure any replacement source is appropriate, as long as this is done before the submission of their annotated bibliography.)

Part B: After their initial source list has been approved, Students will produce an annotated bibliography of those sources. For each source, the student will write at least 2-3 sentences explaining why the information it provides is useful in terms of understanding the circumstances in which the film was made. For the fifth, "bad" source, the student will write at least 2-3 sentences explaining why the information it provides is not sufficiently helpful for the purposes of this assignment.

As part of their annotations, students will also be asked to note if any of their sources exhibit evidence of national or other bias on the part of the author. If none of their sources do this, they will simply note this at the bottom of the bibliography.

Stage 4: Primary Source Research and Annotated Bibliography (initial list of sources due March __ @ 11:59 on Canvas;

In-Class, Instructor-Led Work: Professor Hanson will give overall feedback in class of what went well or poorly in stage 3 before the class proceeds to Stage 4. They will also review what research resources are particularly useful for obtaining film historical primary sources, as those resources likely differ from those Students used for obtaining secondary sources.

Student Work: The same process as Stage 3 (the instructor approves a list of four “good” source and one “bad” source list first, then Students produce a full annotated bibliography) will then be repeated for primary sources. A “good” primary source will be defined as a source that not only qualifies as primary, but provides significant information about the reception of the film in the United States. A “bad” primary source would be either not qualifying as primary, or primary but not providing significant useful information about the film’s U.S. reception.

Stage 3&4 Learning Goals: To learn how to apply their new skills in identifying the kinds of sources they need and finding them among their available resources, as well as discerning better sources from worse. This will also continue the question of how individuals’ perspectives and biases affects their research and writing.

Stage 3&4 Assessment Strategy: The initial list of sources for each stage will be graded on completion, but the final annotated bibliography will be given a letter grade.

Stage 3&4 Assessment Rubric: The Annotated Bibliographies are worth 100 points.

Category of Assessment	Point Value	Criteria of Assessment
Formatting	10 points	The bibliography uses proper citation style (MLA or Chicago), as well as proper formatting, and follows all other assignment instructions.
Source Materials	10 points	The bibliography has sufficient sources (four “good” and one “bad”). Each source meets the requirements for primary/secondary sources, as listed in the assignment sheet for that stage.
Source Information Quality	15 points	Do the four “good” sources provide sufficient relevant information about the research topic to justify inclusion in the bibliography.
Annotation Content and Quality	50 points	Each annotation contains a thoughtful reflection on the information the source provides, and is at least 2-3 sentences. (10 points per source, for a total of 50 points.)
Identifying Bias	15 points	Does the bibliography successfully identify any bias present in the sources, national or otherwise. This must be the third or fourth sentence of the annotation: the first two sentences must be on the overall content of the source.

Stage 5: Synthesizing Sources into a Historical Narrative

In-Class, Instructor-Led Work: Professor Hanson will lecture and provide examples of how discrete sources are transformed into a cohesive historical narrative. In conjunction with this lecture, students will do a in-class group exercise (with sources relevant to the area of film history being studied that week) in which they will practice transforming a set of film sources into a narrative.

Student Work: Part A: Students will be asked to produce a Final Research Report or Presentation summarizing their findings: specifically, they must detail the production process and U.S. reception of the film in question.

Part B: Students will do an in-class peer feedback exercise on a preliminary draft of their final report. This exercise will ask to identify any problems or gaps in their partner's work. Students will have time to adjust their draft given this feedback before submitting the definitive edition of their final report.

Stage 5 Learning Goals: Students will learn to craft a historical narrative from their sources, and practice evaluating the quality of historical narratives in general.

Stage 5 Assessment Strategy: The peer review assessment will be graded on completion, and students will have time (at least a few days if not a week or more) to revise their work submitting their final report will be turned into me for a letter grade.

Stage 5 Assessment Rubric: The Final Research Report will be worth 100 points.

Category of Assessment	Point Value	Criteria of Assessment
Follows Directions	15	Follows all of the directions on the Final Research Report assignment sheet, including the report's length, proper citation style, and so on.
Applies Sources	25	Are the sources listed in the bibliography successfully integrated into the report? If additional sources have been obtained since the earlier annotated bibliographies, are the new sources also within the guidelines for secondary and primary sources?
Narrative Cohesion	30	Does the report present a succinct, easily understandable summary of the film's production and U.S. reception? Is that report clearly grounded in the historical sources, or does it feel disconnected from them?
Information Relevance	30	Does the report successfully answer all the major questions the assignment sheet asked about the film? Is the information as a whole significant, or ancillary to an overall understanding of the film's production and U.S. reception?

Potential Films for the Research Project (may be expanded)

It is **your responsibility** to find research materials and watch your film: the professor will not provide the screening or research materials themselves.

Key to Notations

Queer Film (explicitly or implicitly) = *

Female-Centric Films **

[3rd] = associated with third cinema; all narrative rather than avant-garde

indigenous = films about indigenous peoples

Explicit = film features explicit sexual themes

[&] = film will have a reduced number of required primary sources.

1. Morocco (Germany)*; **
2. Metropolis (Germany)
3. Mädchen in Uniform (Germany)*; **
4. The Bitter Tears of Petra Von Kant (West Germany)*; **
5. Ali: Fear Eats the Soul (West Germany)
6. The Legend of Paul and Paula (East Germany)* **
7. La Strada (Italy)* **
8. Shoeshine (Italy)
9. Divorce: Italian Style (Italy)
10. L'Avventura (Italy)* **
11. Persona (Sweden)*; **
12. I am Curious: Yellow (Sweden)* ** *[explicit]*
13. The Umbrellas of Cherbourg (France)* **
14. Un chant d'amor (France)* *[explicit]*
15. Le Bonheur (France)* **
16. Diabolique (France)*; **
17. News from Home (French-Belgian Coproduction)* **
18. The Spirit of the Beehive (Spain)* **
19. Cría Cuervos (Spain)* **
20. Fireman's Ball (Czechoslovakia)
21. Loves of a Blonde (Czechoslovakia)* **
22. October (Soviet Union)
23. Strike (Soviet Union)
24. The Cranes are Flying (Soviet Union)
25. Stalker (Soviet Union)
26. Branded to Kill (Japan)
27. Ikiru (Japan)
28. Tokyo Story (Japan)
29. The Story of the Last Chrysanthemum (Japan)* **
30. Funeral Parade of Roses (Japan)*
31. Hiroshima Mon Amour (French-Japanese Coproduction)
32. The Housemaid (Korea)* **
33. A Day Off (Korea) */ & /*
34. Spring in a Small Town (China) */ & /*
35. Dragon Inn (Taiwan)* **
36. Fist of Fury (Hong Kong)
37. Insiang (Phillipenes)* ** */ & /*
38. Manila in the Claws of Light (Philippines) */ & /*
39. Pather Panchali (India)
40. Sholay (India)
41. Storm Boy (Australia) *[indigenous story]*
42. Black Girl (French-Senegalese coproduction)* **
43. The Battle of Algiers (Italian-Algerian coproduction) */3rd/*
44. Cairo Station (Egypt)
45. Letter from My Village (Senegal) */ & /*
46. Xala (Senegal) */3rd/*
47. The Cow (Iran) */ & /*
48. The Exterminating Angel (Mexico)
49. Los Olvidados (Mexico)
50. The Holy Mountain (Mexico)
51. Memories of Underdevelopment (Cuba) */3rd/*
52. How Tasty Was My Little Frenchman (Brazil) *[indigenous] / & /*
53. Black God, White Devil (Brazil) */3rd/ / & /*
54. Black Orpheus (Brazil-France-Italy)
55. Prisoners of the Earth (Argentina) */ & /*

Project Timeline and Deadlines

Week	Research Stage	Project Activities	Deadlines
1	0	<None>	
2	0	Project Introduced	
3	1	Film List Distributed by Monday; Intro to Films. Discuss Identifying Film Historical Context	
4	1		Film Write-Up Due 2.12 [pushed back from 2.09 due to snow]
5	2	<Exam 1, 2.13 > Research Plan Template Distributed; Intro to Primary and Secondary Sources; Intro to Identifying Useful Sources	
6	2	Guest Lecture from Hamon Arts Library	
7	2		Research Plan Due 3.07
8	3	Intro to Identifying Good Sources	
<i>Sometime between 3.03 and 4.28: Individual Student-Teacher Conferences</i>			
Spring Break			
9	3	Intro to Citation Styles	Secondary Source Initial List Due 3.26
10	3	<Exam 2, 3.29 >	Secondary Source Ann. Bibliography Due 4.2
11	4	Overall Project Progress Discussion	Primary Source Initial List Due 4.9
12	4		Primary Source Ann. Bibliography Due 4.16
13	4	Discussion of Synthesizing Historical Narratives	Select Paper vs. Presentation 4.23
14	5	Peer Evaluation Workshop	Project First Draft Due for Workshop 4.26
15	5	<Exam 3, 5.1 >	
Finals	5	Presentations during Finals Period (Saturday May 6)	All Projects Due 5.6 3 pm [attendance required for presentations, 3-6 pm]