ATS3100
Die große Stadt

Library Research & Essay Writing Workshop

Metropolis, directed by Fritz Lang, 1927 (litho), German School, (20th century) / Bridgeman Images
Contact us

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Overview

• What are you having trouble with?
• Getting started
• Refine your essay question and searching
• Refining your argumentation via debate
• Introductions and conclusions
The process of writing an essay

1. Analyse the question
2. Brainstorm ideas
3. Research and read sources
4. Construct an outline/plan
5. Draft versions, revisiting steps 1 and 4
6. Edit and proofread before submitting
Your poll will show here

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or
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Getting Started
Your assignment

Details of task: Students will have to write an essay on a set topic relating to one of the texts covered during the semester. They will have to gather (using library sources) and incorporate at least five titles of research literature on their respective topic.

Learning objectives assessed: Students will train their ability to present content in an intellectually reflected, well-structured and academically written way.
Your assignment

Presentation requirements: The essay is to be written in English.

Criteria for marking:
In general:

- content (60%),
- use of research literature (20%),
- style (20%).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Addresses all the assessment criteria</th>
<th>Fails to address one or more of the assessment criteria</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An excellent understanding of the text(s) and the critical and interpretive issues and debates raised by the question.</td>
<td>Fails to address the main issues of the unit and question and omits essential material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear evidence of critical analysis and reflection on the chosen texts and a demonstrated capacity for independent thought.</td>
<td>Essay focuses on description, with scant evidence and no reflection on the chosen texts. Student relies on references with no judgement as to how this works into their argument.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some grasp of methodology in literature analysis should be shown.</td>
<td>Uses no methodology and instead describes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A well organised argument supported by the judicious choice of articles and chapters that reveal divergent views of Romantic literature.</td>
<td>Fails to use the compulsory reading and do any further research. Critical sources are cited with very little judgement used about their quality and usefulness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear expression and precise use of language with no grammatical or spelling mistakes.</td>
<td>Ill expressed, not proof read, incoherent and grammatically unsound.</td>
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Drafting your question
Drafting your essay question

• **First** and foremost, seek an essay topic that is interesting to you. A topic that genuinely engages your interest should be fun to read and write about, and will likely result in a better essay.

• **Second**, make sure your topic is manageable in size. Subjects such as ‘the modern city in German culture’ and ‘Bertolt Brecht and the city’ are the matter of careers by professional academics. You should aim at a limited and sharply focused essay topic.

• **Third**, your essay topic should preferably be phrased in the form of a clearly defined question, rather than a statement. This minimises the tendency towards describing rather than arguing. It also allows subjective judgement by a competent specialist (=Franz-Josef).
Finding your topic

- Der Schock der großen Stadt
- Die Metropole in der deutschen Lyrik
- Die theoretische Erfassung der modernen Metropole
- Die Moderne Metropole und das neue Medium Film
- Die Metropole als Dschungel
- Berlin als Bühne der Geschichte

→ Remember your presentations
What sort of question do you want to be answering?

- Are you interested in context, art, society, culture, religion, the author?
- Do you want to do a comparison?
- Do you prefer a close reading of the text?
- Are you interested in the genre of writing?
- Or a contentious statement so that you can explore it?
- Do you like responding to a quote?

Problems:

- Is it too broad?
- Too narrow?
- Have you got sufficient case studies?
- Sufficient variety of points of view?
Where to start?

To establish one of the ‘debates’ that are to be found in the writing on the topic. Finding this debate is what your research is to help with. Read the topic thinking about:

- What you **do** know
- What you **don’t** know
- What you **need to** know
Research
Research

German Studies: ATS3100 - Die große Stadt

What are scholarly sources?
- Scholarly sources are written as articles, books, or studies.
- They are written by experts who are interested in the subject.
- Secondary sources include a reference list and bibliography.
- They are written by experts in a certain field to provide an overview of the subject.
- They can be a journal article, book chapter, monograph, conference paper, journal article...

Why use scholarly sources?
- Scholarly sources are important for an academic paper because they add credibility to the research.
- They can help you understand the current issues in the field and provide additional evidence for your argument.
- They are written by experts in the field and provide a deeper understanding of the subject.
- They can be used to support your arguments or provide alternative points of view.

Use the right source for the right job
- Scholarly sources can be important for a research paper or a study.
- They are written by experts in the field and provide a deeper understanding of the subject.
- They can help you understand the current issues in the field and provide additional evidence for your argument.
- They can be used to support your arguments or provide alternative points of view.

Secondary sources

Resource Tips

http://guides.lib.monash.edu/german-studies/ATS3100
https://magic.piktochart.com/output/16037897-ats3098-research-tips-air
Brainstorm your own essay question to double check!

- Identify key terms.
- Identify any problems with the key terms (there will be at least one difficult term!).
- What is going to be the hard part to answer?
- What sort of analysis are you going to need to do? (What types of analysis are there?)
- What do you need to know to answer this question?
- What don’t you know?
- Are there two or more sides to the debate in the literature? What are they?
Construct and outline plan
Question

What vision of modernism is represented in Fritz Lang’s *Metropolis*?
Debate

Why?

• A debate is a the raw argument that considers all different arguments and provides evidence
• The winner is the one you write into your essay.
• Having done a debate, you have all the material you need for a good outline.
Debate

Instructions:

• Choose a **contention** from your group’s assessment (the more drafted it is, the easier!).
• Assign those arguing for it and those arguing against.
• Take 10 minutes to quickly give the reasons why, and what evidence. Then 10 minutes to debate it.
### Argumentation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Draft 1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction:</strong> Fritz Lang’s Metropolis represents modernism in his cinematic and technological skills. The story of the film, cannot decide whether to be modernist, being in many ways rather old fashioned, despite its dystopian critique of the city and those who inhabit it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Point 1:</strong> Plot of Metropolis and its development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Point 2:</strong> Lang’s cinematography and modernist film – nocturnal metropolis and hyperbolic modern city.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Point 3:</strong> The problems with the plot of <em>Metropolis</em> and modernism – Babylon, expressionism, romanticism, twee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conclusion:</strong> Modernity can be characterised as the literal advent of modernism, but modernism in art is their attempt to deal with the changing nature of (particularly) the twentieth century. Inherent in modernity is a dichotomy – where modernists are often associated with cultural hegemony and nationalistic tendencies in response to existing authorities. This is particularly the case when the specific art form is engaged in commenting on the use of place, space and landscape and how it shapes both the art but also our visual awareness of it. Although more common in poetry and the visual arts, <em>Metropolis</em> embodies this tension in modernism, carefully constructing through plot and cinematography a criticism of the issues with modernism as well as embodying it. It is both artefact and critique.</td>
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Essay Structure in a linear format

**Intro:** Fritz Lang’s *Metropolis* represents modernism in his cinematic and technological skills. The story of the film, cannot decide whether to be modernist, being in many ways rather old fashioned, despite its dystopian critique of the city and those who inhabit it.

**Conclusion:** Modernity can be characterised as the literal advent of modernism, but modernism in art is their attempt to deal with the changing nature of (particularly) the twentieth century. Inherent in modernity is a dichotomy – where modernists are often associated with cultural hegemony and nationalistic tendencies in response to existing authorities. This is particularly the case when the specific art form is engaged in commenting on the use of place, space and landscape and how it shapes both the art but also our visual awareness of it. Although more common in poetry and the visual arts, *Metropolis* embodies this tension in modernism, carefully constructing through plot and cinematography a criticism of the issues with modernism as well as embodying it. It is both artefact and critique.
Your outline

Debrief:

• What have you missed?
• Have you defined all your key terms?
• How can you go back and answer this more clearly?
# Redrafting the debate

## Draft 2

### Introduction:

**Problem:** Metropolis is described as cinematically modern, but containing the most parochial plot ever. Yet this completely ignores far more complex visions of what modernity is in art, beyond simply representing ‘industry’ and ‘mechanisation.’

**Answer:** This is particularly the case when the specific art form is engaged in commenting on the use of place, space and landscape and how it shapes both the art but also our visual awareness of it. I argue, that although more common in poetry and the visual arts, *Metropolis* embodies the deepest tensions modernism, carefully constructing through plot and cinematography a criticism of issues around class, and the existing order, all the while embodying them. It is both artefact and critique.

### Point 1:
The city and modernist representation (Lang’s nocturnal motif as allegory of vision and modernity)

### Point 2:
Hanging styles of film structures (the combined narrative and cinema of attraction – talk about Mechanical Maria and gender here)

### Point 3:
The role of allegory in interpreting the city (Babylon and religious overlay – woven into the images of the city and morality)

### Conclusion:

**Analysis of Lang’s work as a director is discussed in terms of it being a ‘extended metaphor on the vicissitudes of vision’, in particular the panoptic implications. The rest of Metropolis suffers from a bad plot. However, as I have argued, if we redefine modernism to not think just about the historical context, or the narrative, but instead think about what characterises the movement in terms of art, what we find is that this contradiction in the film is in fact part of its point. The modern – in all its sense – is inherently about attempts to deal with the changing nature of (particularly) the twentieth century. Inherent in modernity is a dichotomy that often undermines the very act of attempting to innovate or change – where modernists are often associated with cultural hegemony and nationalistic tendencies in response to existing authorities. *Metropolis* is deliberately commenting on this, in particular the fraught relationship between Germany and modernity, providing all the different elements of modernism into one dystopian dream – and in this way both plot and cinematography make sense in their juxtaposition.
What goes in your conclusion?

Hint for concluding:
• What is modernity?
• Why study the city to understand modernity?
• Is this tied directly to German culture and in what way?

Mine: The modern – in all its sense – is inherently about attempts to deal with the changing nature of (particularly) the twentieth century. Inherent in modernity is a dichotomy that often undermines the very act of attempting to innovate or change – where modernists are often associated with cultural hegemony and nationalistic tendencies in response to existing authorities. Metropolis is deliberately commenting on this, in particular the fraught relationship between Germany and modernity, providing all the different elements of modernism into one dystopian dream – and in this way both plot and cinematography make sense in their juxtaposition.
Citing and referencing
Referencing Film


- **Title in italics followed by full stop**
- **Director(s) followed by a full stop**
- **Original year of release followed by a full stop**
- **Distributor followed by a comma**
- **Year of release on platform followed by a full stop**
- **Online platform in italics and Medium of publication, each followed by a full stop**
- **Access date followed by a full stop**