

# Film and Media Studies Writing

Film and Media Studies (FMS) grew out of classic humanities fields like English and History. As such, for the most part FMS papers use a similar structure and analysis as English papers. However, two factors distinguish FMS as a field. The first is the use of images. Because images play such a prominent role in film analysis, FMS writers must adhere to a specific format for describing scenes. Furthermore, it is common and acceptable to embed images or Youtube clips in a paper. This leads to the second unique aspect of FMS papers: the emphasis on open access. Much FMS writing is directed at a general audience rather than academics. As such, FMS writers are encouraged to using a engaging and readable style.

## *Common Challenges For Writers New to the Field*

- Sweeping, unsupported claims  
Example: "Since the beginning of film..."
- Learning to pay close attention to reading aesthetics such as blocking, lighting, and costuming
- Struggle to take liberty with interpretation or taking too much liberty

### Citations

*Alien*. Dir Ridley Scott. Perf. Sigourney Weaver. Twentieth-Century fox, 1979. DVD.

## Style

### *Engaging Hook*

As previously stated, FMS papers rely more heavily on audience engagement. Something like a blog post must constantly convince the audience to keep reading. The hook is the first part of this. The "hook" doesn't have to directly relate to the paper's thesis, and you can even use figurative language in a hook-- it just has to grab the reader's attention.

EXAMPLE: here is a hook from a theory paper on Action Heroines from the 1970's to the present. Notice how the student writer engages in the first person, and uses imagery and humor to begin her formal paper. This may seem over-the-top to an English student but it is totally acceptable and perhaps encouraged in FMS.

*Usually when I'm out battling hulking men and various underlings of evil I like to wear my studded leather bikini (covering all the basics – because, honestly, what are the chances my foes will hit the other 85% of my exposed flesh?), don my golden heels of speed, display my sultry and permanently immaculate*