

Film Genres | Film Noir

RESEARCH PAPER TOPICS

Your assignment is to write a 10-page (3,000 word) research paper on one of the topics listed below. Your paper should combine close cinematic analysis, original arguments and outside research relevant to your topic. Your research must draw from *at least 4 sources not contained in the course readings*; please use proper citation format when quoting or paraphrasing information from these sources. You must write on *at least one film or media text not screened in class*; please do not write again on the film you chose for your sequence analysis assignment.

1. **Re-Makes:** Compare and contrast a classic noir with its more recent re-make. How is similar material adapted differently in different contexts? What historical and cultural factors might account for these changes? Some possible pairings: *The Big Clock* and *No Way Out*; *Criss Cross* and *The Underneath*; both versions of *D.O.A.* or *The Postman Always Rings Twice*; *Reckless Moment* and *The Deep End*.
2. **Femme fatales:** Compare and contrast a classic femme fatale (*Criss Cross* or *The Lady From Shanghai*) with one of her more recent cousins in *Bound*, *The Last Seduction* or *Devil in a Blue Dress*. How do contemporary femmes fatales differ from the classic versions? What factors might account for these changes?
3. **Marlowe:** Compare and contrast Raymond Chandler's character Philip Marlowe in two or three of his different cinematic incarnations: *The Big Sleep*, *Lady in the Lake*, *Marlowe*, *Murder, My Sweet*, and/or *The Long Goodbye*. How and why does Chandler's character change in different periods and contexts?
4. **Hard-Boiled source material:** Compare and contrast a "hard-boiled" novel with its filmic counterpart. How was the adaptation produced? What difficulties, if any, were encountered during the adaptation? How do the two versions differ? Some possible pairings: *The Grifters* (Thompson/Frears); *The Maltese Falcon* (Hammet/Houston); *The Lady in the Lake* (Chandler/Montgomery); *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (Cain/Garnett).
5. **International post-war noir:** Investigate the re-working of film noir conventions other cultural and historical contexts, such as post-WW II Italy (*Ossessione*) or post-WW II Japan (*Stray Dog*) or the French New Wave (*Le doulos*, *Le samourai*, *Bob le flambeur*, *Breathless*, *Shoot the Piano Player*, *Bande apart*?)
6. **1970s Noir Revival:** Investigate the 1970s revival of film noir in the US. What aspects of film noir did 70s critics and filmmakers admire? How were its themes relevant again in post-Watergate America? How do films like *Chinatown* and *Night Moves* compare to classic noir?
7. **Noir TV:** How are elements from film noir incorporated into (and transformed by) television? Programs to consider include classics like *Peter Gunn* and more recent series like *Veronica Mars*.
8. **Noir Parody:** What happens to noir conventions when they are parodied in more recent films like *Dead Men Don't Wear Plaid*, *Who Frame Roger Rabbit?* and/or *Kiss, Kiss, Bang, Bang?*

You may also pursue a topic of your own choice, but you must get advance approval from Prof. Stamp.

❖ Late papers will be penalized one grade increment per day ❖

❖ Any act of plagiarism will result in failure of the class ❖

Due in class Wednesday, June 3rd