In this essay, you will be developing an argument based on the connections and/or distinctions that you see between two theorists of film. This is not a simple “compare and contrast paper”; rather, you are examining a particular idea about film through setting two different theorists in conversation with one another. In essence, you will be producing a dialectical argument, in which your synthesis between these theorists will be your thesis. The argument itself should seek to ask and answer a couple of possible broad questions:

**Why is this issue an important one to consider in the first place?**

**What do the similarities or disparities of ideas about this issue reveal about film as a medium?**

**What might they reveal about the project of film theory?**

Interweaving these larger questions together with a concentrated focus should help you to develop a clear argument through specific textual examples. With that in mind, please follow one of the sets of questions below in order to construct this argument. As you introduce each position, carefully summarize what each author says about the particular issue at hand and explain how that issue fits into the author's theory of film as a whole.

1. Many theorists have compared film to intellectual processes, or they have theorized that they can produce an “active” (i.e., “thinking”) spectator. What are the common points of discussion here, and how do the different conclusions establish each author’s respective theory of film? (Possible points of comparison: Epstein and Munsterberg; Munsterberg and Eisenstein; Eisenstein and Bazin; Bazin and Metz; Bazin and Epstein; Eisenstein and Metz; Metz and H.D.)

2. André Bazin, Siegfried Kracauer, and Jonas Mekas each examine film’s relation to reality – either to represent or transform it. Pair up two of these authors to consider how each theorist’s respective position on film’s relation to reality allows him to develop a broader theory of film.

3. In theorizing film, writers inevitably attempt to define what makes cinema “cinematic,” “cinematographic,” or “filmic.” Look at two varying positions on the distinctive qualities of film form, as well as the different terms authors use to describe these qualities. Such a comparison could point to the evolution of the language of film theory itself. (Possible points of comparison: Epstein and Eisenstein; Eisenstein and Bazin; Eisenstein and Mekas; Kracauer and Mekas; Mekas and Epstein.)

4. Several theorists consider film as a “language.” What are the elements of cinematic language as they respectively define it? What does this tell us about “language” as a system? What does it tell us about film? (Possible points of comparison: Bazin and Metz; Eisenstein and Metz; Bazin and Eisenstein.)
**Requirements:**
• Each essay should follow just one of the above questions.
• You must examine two different authors’ positions. To do so, please summarize their broader arguments and also look at a small number of particular examples through paraphrasing and direct citation.
• Develop an argument that is distinct from those of the authors you’re examining; in other words, your argument will not be a summary but a unique thesis that you develop by carefully considering the links or the oppositions between the theorists you discuss. Again, think of this as a conversation or dialogue between two theorists around a particular topic that together produces an argument. As you compose your thesis, be sure that you have answered the question “So what?” or, more specifically, “What does this say about film as a medium?”
• As noted above, papers must be 4-5 pp. (not longer, not shorter), typed, stapled, with normal font and margins, numbered pages, a title (one other than “Essay #1”), and a Works Cited page.

**Options:**
• You may continue to explore an idea that you’ve already discussed in your response paper. Thus you may adapt and integrate most or part of the revision of the response paper you’ve completed for the class.
• You may analyze an example from a film we have seen in class in order to help develop your argument. This example might help you open and/or close your essay by, for instance, asking a question of the theoretical texts. Or, you might look at this example from the standpoint of the two different theories of film you’re considering. Either way, please don’t allow it to take over your essay.
• You may analyze the form the author’s writing takes, in service of your argument about the theorist’s ideas.