



Author of the following didactic resource: Anna M. Brígido-Corachán  
Departament de Filologia Anglesa i Alemana – Universitat de València  
Academic Year 2022-2023

## **INSTRUCTIONS TO CREATE LITERARY VIDEOESSAYS**

### **GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY:**

**DEFINITION:** A video essay examines a literary text taking a critical approach and drawing from specific literary and historical contexts. It is based on a traditional academic genre—the essay—to which visual, aural, performative, and digital elements are added in order to more effectively present its main topic and argumentation. It is a digital, multimodal learning object that enables us to share critical ideas with others in an engaging manner.

To produce your video essay, you need to start by selecting a novel from the list of recommended readings available in Aula Virtual. Once you read the novel in detail you need to identify a key idea or critical aspect that you would like to develop more in depth, in your essay taking into account: 1. Our class discussions of related North American texts and literary/historical contexts in class, 2. specialized academic articles and books to help you understand its social and historical and social context of production, key themes, stylistic elements, etc.

**Developing collaborative learning skills:** The project will be carried out in groups of two or three students and will be assisted by students from the Degree of Audiovisual Communication and/or other available student mentors.

**THE MAXIMUM LENGTH OF THE VIDEO IS 7 MINUTES.**

### **COMPETENCES DEVELOPED:**

- The ability to assimilate knowledge in the field of literary and cultural studies and to clearly define and defend one's point of view.
- The ability to handle and synthesize bibliographical information, to gather and interpret relevant data in order to make judgements concerning social or ethical issues with an appropriate respect for the defence of Human Rights, gender equality, and respect for cultural, ethnic, and sexual diversity, environmental and democratic values.
- The development of communicative and social skills and the ability to transmit scientific output within a context of multiliteracies through the creation of a multimodal text.
- The development of critical thinking skills, literary analysis, and digital competence.
- The acquisition of autonomous learning skills that will enable students to go on successfully to further specialized study.



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## **STEPS TO CREATE YOUR DIGITAL PROJECT:**

### **General considerations:**

**THE VIDEO FILE:** As the digital project may become a public learning object of which you will be (co)authors I strongly recommend you to use a video format that can be easily shared with others so think about the digital tools you will be needing before you start, it's as easy as using a cell phone and a basic editing program like imovie. The project has to be eventually saved as an **MP4** file.

**THE SCRIPT:** In addition to the video, you will also submit a copy of your academic essay / script to Aula Virtual /Moodle. This text has to include a list of all the bibliographical references used (books, websites, journal articles, images, music and any other copyrighted material used in the production of the video essay). The bibliographical section and in-text citations have to follow **MLA or APA citation style guidelines**. This means that when you use someone else's ideas (even if they come from a website, a blog, or a tweet) this use must be clearly acknowledged in your script. When you do your preliminary research, please keep track of your sources, include quotation marks for direct citations when you use someone else's ideas literarily, and in-text parenthetical citations after each idea you use that is not your own. Eg. (Smith "Understanding Postmodernism" 5). The video must also include a list of all academic references/texts used in the References or Bibliography section.

Note that **PLAGIARISM**, that is, using the words and ideas of others without citing them correctly will mean that all students in the group get an **F in the assignment**.

### **STEPS:**

**1.PRIMARY TEXT:** Find a novel you really would like to discuss and get your lecturer's approval, then read it in depth and take lots of notes. The ability to negotiate workload with a partner, to delegate, and to divide the task equally is one of the **SKILLS** you have to acquire throughout this degree. Even if you are doing an individual project it may be handy to collaborate with a classmate on your project as you'll need help with the camera, editing, etc. You can discuss the texts together and learn from each other.

**2. CONTEXT:** Once you've read the novel, reflect on your notes and consider elements of language and style, structure, ideology, symbols, historical context... do not just focus on characters and plot. **Pick a good topic/issue to develop and then e-mail your lecturer to schedule a tutorial session where you will discuss your topic and narrow it down to a thesis statement or a more specific topic/aspect/symbol. Find 3-5 strong academic**



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**articles that critical examine your novel and topic of choice to help you understand the historical/social context and the context of production of the novel and get a better grasp of the material prior to writing your own script.**

**When choosing a specific topic/hypothesis**, take into account that you'll be using an **audiovisual format and channel to communicate it**. This means that either you'll appear on camera explaining the ideas, or else you can use photographs, video, puppets, drawings, etc. + voice over narration. Be creative but make sure that the audiovisual components you chose effectively support your critical content. Your voice, tone, oral expression, choice of images and music, etc. are also key to communicate the ideas effectively so rehearse your script!

**Once your outline has been reviewed by the lecturer you can schedule a follow up tutorial session** to discuss potential challenges, doubts etc. prior to writing your script. You can also ask to get help from a student mentor that can offer additional feedback before you start the production of your video to adjust your script before recording.

### **3. PREPARING YOUR ESSAY SCRIPT AND VIDEO:**

**3.1. ESSAY SCRIPT:** Make sure you organize your **contents** in a didactic manner. Your script should include a short and engaging introduction to the primary text (1minute maximum), a clearly laid topic or thesis statement, examples of close-reading, and critical analysis. You want to convince your viewers that this novel is worth reading so pick a good topic!

**3.2. VIDEO AND VOICE:** Your **video** will be a combination of voice-over or live oral narration, images and video, and may include some text to support your argument (for example keywords used, names of characters, places or literary critics mentioned, excerpts from the original text, subtitles if needed). You can also use some background music but make sure it does not interfere with your voice, which has to be very clear. Remember that the **SCRIPT** of your video also has to be handed in (uploaded to Aula Virtual with bibliographical references and citations). It will be part of your final grade and so will all of the research carried out.

**3.3. USE OF IMAGES:** You may use **IMAGES and VIDEO** you have taken yourself, or images and video from the Internet but make sure they don't have a copyright. Remember that all these books, materials, images, songs, and websites must be cited at the end of your video and of your script. Images should have at least 600 pixels so they don't come out blurred in your video. If the novel you pick has a **film or TV adaptation do not use and excessive amount of images or clips from it**. as it is most certainly copyrighted material. If you use a clip it cannot exceed a few seconds (which should be cited on screen) and, if you use images from it, try to limit them to three or four to discuss an element of the adaptation, they should also be cited on screen. Try to be imaginative and use your own images and footage.



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## **4. RECORDING YOUR PROJECT:**

### **4.1. SOFTWARE**

You can record your video with a video camera, with your cell phone, or with any other device that is free and easy to use (and that provides clear sound and images!). To edit your video you can use editing software that is already integrated in your computer or tablet, or any other programs that are free and available online.

### **4.2. PRE-PRODUCTION**

In addition to a camera and software, it is important to have a **good script** that is grammar-proofed! and that includes engaging, critical vocabulary. Your delivery of the contents can be a bit informal and playful but your oral presentation has to be professional and show your in-depth knowledge of the context and your analytical skills as applied to this specific literary text. You should also rehearse your video a few times: pay attention to pronunciation, vocalization, intonation, etc. Get an English-language native person to coach you if needed to make sure that your words and pronunciation are adequate. (If you need help with pronunciation let me know ASAP and I'll get you a language assistant).

**4.3. RECORDING:** Record the text speaking as clearly and loudly as possible. It should sound spontaneous, communicative, and engaging; do not merely read your notes in a monotonous “reading” voice. If you are recording your video outdoors watch out for wind, external sounds, etc. that may muffle your delivery of the words.

**4.4. EDITING YOUR VIDEO:** Insert audiovisual aids (images, text, music) to make your project more appealing, didactic, and creative. Make sure you list all sources used in a bibliography section at the end of the video and if you use copyrighted music make sure it does not exceed a few seconds of the song.



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## ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECT:

Your video essays will be assessed using the following criteria:

- 1. Research, argumentation, and critical analysis** (depth of knowledge and understanding of the topic, adequacy of bibliographical references used, critical thinking and research skills developed, close-reading examples, coherence and originality of the analysis). 50%
- 2. Communicative competence:** general structure and organization of the ideas in the presentation, pronunciation, clarity of voice, delivery, and tone. Grammatical correctness. 20%
- 3. Multiliteracies competence:** audiovisual presentation of the material (adequate choice of images, music, editing, visual style, did it include words and/or text to help you understand the subject matter? Coherence of the elements in relation to the script and main thesis. 20%
- 4. Didactic value and creativity:** interest of the video as a whole, does it make you want to read the story/novel? Did you learn new things about the topic? Was it intelligently presented or rather shallow? Was it especially creative and/or original? 10%

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