

Hi folks,

The paper that constitutes the assessment for this course is due fairly soon. Below, you will find the general information you need to know, including a reiteration of the five prompts (**remember you only need to respond to one**). However, beneath all of this, you will also find some general pointers about how best to respond to either prompt: the areas of assessment for each prompt, and below more general advice relevant to all of the prompts. We will also go over this assessment at the end of our final session on Thursday 8 December. I hope all of this is quite exhaustive, but if you do have any questions, please reach out to me by email and I will do all I can to help. An emailed response is guaranteed within 24 hours.

best,  
richard

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **ASSESSMENT**

At the end of the course, students are to submit **one** circa. 1500–2000-word essay written in response to **one** of five prompts derived from the topics introduced across the course.

**Value:** 100% of Final Grade

**Due Date:** Midnight CET Sunday 8 January 2023

**Note:** films screened on this course may **NOT** be used as examples for the corresponding prompt, but may be used for a different prompt. For example, *Grand Budapest Hotel* may not be used for prompt E, but it can be used for any other prompt.

**Advice and Learning Outcomes:** Towards the end of the course, an advice sheet will be issued spotlighting the general qualities graded highly on this course. Time will also be set aside towards the end of the final session to discuss these matters.

### **Prompt A**

The supposed visionary status of quirky cinema is undermined by its reliance on the cornerstones of indie branding. Accordingly, show how a quirky film tries to convince its

audience that it is a superior alternative to “mainstream” culture, by its evocation of authenticity and autonomy.

### **Targeted Learning Outcomes/Areas of Assessment**

- I. The core values of indie.
- II. The logics for branding quirky films in this way.
- III. How an individual quirky film projects these values.

### **Prompt B**

While usually framed as the distinctive visions of Auteur filmmakers, quirky cinema also can be seen to represent a calculated audience-targeting strategy aimed at the hipster subculture. Accordingly, show how the content and themes of a quirky film are designed to be specifically relevant to this outwardly cool but internally sensitive audience segment.

### **Targeted Learning Outcomes/Areas of Assessment**

- I. The traits of the hipster subculture.
- II. The dynamics of targeting this subculture.
- III. How the content of a quirky film has been tailored specifically to appeal to this audience.

### **Prompt C**

Quirky Cinema has been criticized for portraying its young female leads as Manic Pixie Dream Girls, which for some is rather sexist. However, it is clear that some quirky films try to rework this trope to avoid charges of sexism, sometimes going as far as to critique elements of the Manic Pixie Dream Girl. With these points in mind, consider how a quirky film depicts this female character-type.

### **Targeted Learning Outcomes/Areas of Assessment**

- I. Why the Manic Pixie Dream Girl trope has been considered sexist.
- II. Why and how some quirky films distance themselves from this trope.
- III. How a quirky film depicts its female characters.

### **Prompt D**

Quirky cinema has long been associated with a preoccupation for depicting absent or flawed father figures. However, it is clear that some quirky films seek to offer more sympathetic

portrayals of such characters. With these points in mind, consider how a quirky film characterizes fathers and/or their surrogates.

### **Targeted Learning Outcomes/Areas of Assessment**

- I. Why quirky cinema's depiction of father figures is deemed quite negative
- II. Why some quirky films try to depict father figures more sympathetically.
- III. How a quirky film depicts father figures.

### **Prompt E**

Quirky cinema is often criticized for avoiding engagement with serious socio-political topics. However, it is clear that some quirky films do in fact centralize matters of great socio-political importance. With this point in mind, consider how a quirky film seeks to make a statement about large-scale issues that impact society as a whole.

### **Targeted Learning Outcomes/Areas of Assessment**

- I. Why quirky cinema has been accused of being apolitical
- II. Why some quirky films do in fact engage with large-scale socio-political issues.
- III. How a quirky film passes comment on issues that affect large swathes of society.

All Essays are to be submitted in PDF or word format to MS TEAMS or to [516779@mail.muni.cz](mailto:516779@mail.muni.cz) or [richard\\_nowell@hotmail.com](mailto:richard_nowell@hotmail.com) - **Please include your name and the course title in the name of the file.**

### **GENERAL ADVICE FOR ALL PROMPTS**

In the case of all prompts, you are being invited to touch upon three main areas:

1. how some scholars have understood the topic in question.
2. how this has been complicated in the corresponding session.
3. how an example film relates to these two positions.

Accordingly, strong papers will consider all of these phenomena to some extent. Strong papers are therefore likely to include substantial analysis of the example film, but also significant contextualisation and conceptualisation of the topic, alongside engagement with

the existing scholarly ideas. As a general guide, papers evincing the following qualities stand to score well, irrespective of which prompt they respond to.

1. A direct, focused, argument-driven response to the prompt. You are being asked to respond in a particular way; avoid speaking around the topic.
2. A direct, sustained, and overt engagement with the relevant scholarly ideas, referenced accordingly. The supplied readings suffice for the paper; however, you may include other scholarship as well, if you see fit to do so. Personally, I advise paraphrasing and referencing rather than relying exclusively on direct quotes; doing so demonstrates an unambiguous and deep understanding of the material in a manner cutting and pasting from the scholarship does not.
3. A solid assertion of argument and your position vis-a-vis the existing scholarship upfront in the introduction; this imbues all that follows with a clear sense of significance. Oftentimes it also renders a conclusive summary redundant.
4. Economical use of examples. Try to avoid over-describing the film. Also, avoid including a separate plot synopsis, as your examples will already spotlight the relevant aspects of the film (and this is a short paper).
5. Clear and economical writing - if you are unsure of a term, play it safe rather than risk being misunderstood. Given that many students are writing in a second or even third language, significant leeway will be provided. The fact that the group consists of non-native speakers of English is always taken in to account.
6. By way of reminder, films screened on this course **MAY NOT** be used for the corresponding topic. For example, the prompt on Father Figures may NOT use either *Big Fish* or *A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood*, but may for example use *Submarine* or *Eagle vs. Shark*. The class slides always feature a selection of topic-relevant films, in case you are struggling to select an example film. Please be aware that, if deviating from these suggestions, you should keep within the film-type. If in doubt, email me for confirmation about whether your film choice is likely to work.

**Grading/Evaluation:** Grades from A-F will be awarded based on the following criteria, please be aware that concessions will be made around language, given students will be writing in a language other than their mother tongue.

	<b>Argumentation/Understanding</b>	<b>Sources/Evidence</b>	<b>Communication</b>
<b>A</b> <b>90&lt;</b>	Insightful, vigorous, and demonstrating considerable depth of understanding and a significant amount of original thought; addressing prompt directly through a wholly coherent synthesis of ideas; demonstrating a degree of mastery over subject; demonstrating a deep and thorough understanding of key concepts.	Full range of set resources consulted; sources employed with significant discrimination and sound judgment; thorough assessment of evidence; use of a broad range of examples.	Near-Faultless typography and layout; near-flawless turns of phrase and expression; sophisticated and precise vocabulary; clear structure; exemplary citation and bibliography.
<b>B</b> <b>80 – 89.99</b>	Perceptive and insightful; some evidence of original thought; for the most part addressing prompt directly; mainly coherent synthesis of ideas; thorough and somewhat critical understanding of key concepts.	A fairly wide range of set resources consulted; solid assessment of evidence; sophisticated use of a fairly broad range of examples.	Very Solid typography and layout; few errors in grammar; mainly sophisticated turns of phrase and expression; mostly clear structure; strong citation and bibliography.
<b>C</b> <b>70-</b>	Solid understanding addressed, for the most part, to the prompt; good synthesis of ideas;	Some sources consulted; evidence of some assessment of evidence; use of	Good typography and layout; comprehensible and largely error-free grammar, turns of phrase, and

<b>79.99</b>	reasonably solid understanding of key concepts; evidence of gaps in knowledge and some minor misunderstandings of key concepts.	mostly workable examples.	expression; reasonable clearly structured; some attempt to provide citation and bibliography.
<b>D</b> <b>60 – 69.99</b>	Indirectly addressed to prompt; no real synthesis of ideas; mainly descriptive rather than analytical; patchy understanding of key concepts; significant gaps in knowledge.	Restricted range of sources consulted; superficial understanding of evidence; limited range of examples, many of which are inappropriate.	Poor typography and layout; numerous errors of grammar; limited vocabulary; ambiguous or inaccurate turns of phrase; weak or missing citations and bibliography.
<b>E</b> <b>50 – 59.99</b>	Barely addressed to the prompt; largely disconnected series of points; poor understanding of key concepts; major gaps in knowledge.	No sources consulted; poor understanding of evidence; few useful examples.	Poor typography and layout; numerous errors of grammar; limited vocabulary; ambiguous or inaccurate turns of phrase; no citations or bibliography.
<b>F</b> <b>&lt;50</b>	Not addressed to the prompt; largely incoherent; little evidence of an understanding of key concepts; demonstrating little knowledge of subject.	No sources consulted; poor understanding of evidence; no useful examples.	Poor typography and layout; numerous errors of grammar; limited vocabulary; ambiguous or inaccurate turns of phrase; no citations or bibliography.
<b>ZERO</b>	No paper submitted; or paper clearly showing no effort to respond to prompt.		