So what are the humanities?

- The humanities are those subjects that study the way people express themselves. They focus on values, ideas, and ideals about how people express them.

- Humanists look at questions of influence, meaning, and interpretations of artistic works or the artists themselves.

- You won’t be doing the interpretation and observations all yourself; you’ll be finding and using the research humanists have already done!
What types of questions do humanities scholars ask?

- How realistic is the depiction of life in an artwork?
- How is an artistic expression significant to a cultural group?
- How did the artist/author’s life influence his/her work?
- How did societal values or events influence the creation of an artistic work?
- Why is a religious practice significant to a particular society?

But how do I prove something in humanities? Isn’t it all about opinion?

Evidence in the humanities includes the primary source (the artwork, piece of literature, etc.) as well as scholars’ interpretations. It’s not as “black & white” as social or natural sciences—that’s just the nature of researching artistic & cultural expressions!
Click on a heading to explore topics in that subject area

• Film
• Theater
• Literature
• Philosophy & Religion
• Music & Dance
• Visual Arts
• Architecture

These slides do not represent an exhaustive list of topics.
If you wish to research something not listed here for your paper, remember to consult your professor first.

Online library resources will require you to log in using your UD Network username and password if you are off-campus.

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Film – Influential Directors

• Jordan Peele (1979)
• Ava DuVernay (1972)
• M. Night Shyamalan (1970)
• Wes Anderson (1969)
• The Wachowskis (1965, 1967)
• Quentin Tarantino (1963)
• Tim Burton (1958)
• Spike Lee (1957)
• Coen Brothers (1955, 1958)
• Kathryn Bigelow (1951)
• George Lucas (1944)
• Martin Scorsese (1942)
• Steven Spielberg (1946)
• Francis Ford Coppola (1939)
• Stanley Kubrick (1928-1999)
• Mel Brooks (1926)
• Sidney Lumet (1924-2011)
• Orson Welles (1915-1985)
• Alfred Hitchcock (1899-1980)
Film – Themes and Genres

• LGBTQ people
  • Coming of age stories
• Native representation
• African Americans
  • Representation
  • Civil Rights
  • Slavery
• Asian Americans
• Whitewashing in Film

• Women in Film
  • Sexualization
  • Characterization
    • Disney Princesses
    • Female filmmakers
• Science fiction
• Westerns
• Horror
• Film Noir
• Indie films
Tips for Writing about Film

- Films can be fun to watch but may be challenging to research! Not all films have scholarly sources available.
- Watch the film(s) you are researching multiple times—once is not enough.
- Don’t be put off if there are subtitles. You will get used to using them.
- Always watch the director’s commentary if there is one (look in special features) to find out the director’s intentions. You can use it as a source!
- It’s ok to use sources about the book or the play if the movie is based on either.
More Tips for Writing about Film

• Look in Academic Search, Masterfile Premier, & JSTOR for film reviews.
  • Search by title of film as well as director.
  • To differentiate search results, add term film, cinema, or motion picture. Or add the director’s last name.

• Use books on film.

• Consider broadening your topic beyond one film:
  • Directors can be good subjects & help broaden your topic beyond the film itself. Search Literature Resource Center for more information
  • Write about multiple films. Focus on 2+ films with similar themes, such as: poverty, women’s roles, social conditions, political turmoil, country identity, war, etc.

• Discuss how realistic (or not) the depictions of life are in a film.
  • Check out streaming media in Films on Demand for documentaries about a country or region.
Theater

- **Arthur Miller**
  - The Crucible
  - Death of a Salesman

- **Eugene O’Neill**
  - The Iceman Commeth
  - Long Day’s Journey Into Night

- **Tennessee Williams**
  - A Streetcar Named Desire
  - Cat on a Hot Tin Roof
  - The Glass Menagerie

- **Tony Kushner**
  - Angels in America

- **Thornton Wilder**
  - Our Town
  - The Skin of our Teeth

- **Musical Theater**
  - **Stephen Sondheim**
  - Rodgers and Hammerstein
Literature – Poetry

- Tracy K. Smith (1972)
- Natasha Trethewey (1966)
- Juan Felipe Herrera (1948)
- Louise Glück (1943)
- Lucille Clifton (1936-2010)
- Mary Oliver (1935-2019)
- Sylvia Plath (1932-1963)
- Adrienne Rich (1929-2012)
- Maya Angelou (1928-2014)
- Anne Sexton (1928-1974)

- Robert Lowell (1917-1977)
- Elizabeth Bishop (1911-1979)
- Langston Hughes (1902-1967)
- E.E. Cummings (1894-1962)
- T.S. Eliot (1888-1965)
- Wallace Stevens (1879-1955)
- Robert Frost (1874-1963)
- Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)
- Walt Whitman (1819-1892)
- Edgar Allen Poe (1809-1849)
Literature – Other Works
20th Century and Contemporary

- John Green (1977)
  - The Fault in Our Stars

- Stephen King (1947)
  - The Shining
  - The Stand
  - Short stories

- Alice Walker (1944)
  - The Color Purple

- Margaret Atwood (1939)
  - The Handmaid’s Tale
  - Short Stories

- Hunter S. Thompson (1937-2005)
  - Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas

- John Updike (1932-2009)
  - Beloved
  - The Bluest Eye
  - Song of Solomon

- Harper Lee (1926-2016)
  - To Kill a Mockingbird
  - Go Set a Watchman

- James Baldwin (1924-1987)
  - If Beale Street Could Talk
  - Essays

- Jack Kerouac (1922-1969)
  - On the Road

- J.D. Salinger (1919-2010)

- Toni Morrison (1931)
  - Beloved
  - The Bluest Eye
  - Song of Solomon

- The Invisible Man

- Eudora Welty (1909-2001)
  - Short stories

- John Steinbeck (1902-1968)
  - The Grapes of Wrath
  - Of Mice and Men

- Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961)
  - For Whom the Bell Tolls

- F. Scott Fitzgerald (1896-1940)
  - The Great Gatsby

- Zora Neale Hurston (1891-1960)
  - Their Eyes Were Watching God
Literature – Other Works

19th Century

- Jack London (1876-1916)
  - The Call of the Wild
  - White Fang
- Willa Cather (1873-1947)
  - My Antonia
- Edith Wharton (1862-1937)
  - The Age of Innocence
  - The House of Mirth
- Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860-1935)
  - The Yellow Wallpaper
- Kate Chopin (1851-1883)
  - The Awakening
  - Short stories
- Mark Twain (1835-1910)
  - The Adventures of Tom Sawyer
  - The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn
- Louisa May Alcott (1832-1888)
  - Little Women
- Edgar Allen Poe (1809-1849)
  - Short stories
- Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862)
  - Walden
- Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864)
  - The Scarlet Letter
  - Short stories
- Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882)
  - Essays
Philosophy & Religion

- Native Americans and religion
  - Peyote rituals
  - Spirituality
- Voodoo in New Orleans
  - Marie Laveau
- Catholicism
- Pentecostalism
- Mennonites
- Amish
- Reform Judaism
- Scientology
- Jesus Christ Church of Latter-Day Saints
- Jehovah’s Witnesses
- American Philosophy
  - Pragmatism
  - John Dewey
Music & Dance – Jazz and Blues

History and Styles
• Jazz history – background
• Blues history - background
• Cold war era
• Swing and Big Band
• Free Jazz
• Latin Jazz
• Regional styles
  • New Orleans and Jazz
  • Blues in Chicago

Jazz music and race
Women in Jazz
Improvisation

Influential People
• Louis Armstrong
• Nat King Cole
• Muddy Waters
• B.B. King
• Duke Ellington
• Benny Goodman
• Glenn Miller
• Nina Simone
• Billie Holiday
• Ella Fitzgerald
• George Gershwin
  • Rhapsody in Blue
Music & Dance – Rock

- Rock and Roll
  - Elvis Presley
  - The Beach Boys
  - The Carpenters
- Vietnam war and rock music
- Woodstock
- Psychedelic Rock
  - The Doors
  - Jimi Hendrix
  - The Grateful Dead
- Funk
  - Sly and the Family Stone
- Prince
- Southern Rock
  - Lynyrd Skynyrd
- Punk Rock
- Heavy Metal
  - Metallica
- Bruce Springsteen
- Joan Jett
- Sonic Youth
- Grunge Rock
  - Nirvana
- Green Day
- Female Rock Musicians
Music & Dance – Country and Folk

- **Country**
  - Dolly Parton
  - Loretta Lynn
  - Johnny Cash
  - Merle Haggard
  - George Jones

- **Country music and politics**

- **Grand Ole Opry**

- **Singer/Songwriters**
  - Willie Nelson
  - Bob Dylan
  - Joan Baez
  - Woody Guthrie
  - Janis Joplin
  - Simon & Garfunkel
  - Leonard Cohen

- **Protest songs**
Music & Dance – R&B and Soul

- R&B
- Soul Music
- Gospel Music
- Motown
- Aretha Franklin
- Otis Redding
- James Brown
- Marvin Gaye
- Sam Cooke
- The Supremes
- Diana Ross
- The Jackson Five
- The Temptations
- Smokey Robinson
- Chaka Kahn
- Tina Turner
- Whitney Houston
- Stevie Wonder
Music & Dance – Pop and Hip Hop

**Disco**
- Saturday Night Fever
- Donna Summer

**Pop Music - history**
- Cher
- Madonna
- Michael Jackson
- Janet Jackson
- Beyoncé
  - Lemonade album

**Hip Hop**

**Rap**
- Tupac Shakur
- Public Enemy
- Wu-Tang Clan
- Childish Gambino
- Kendrick Lamar
- Eminem
- Notorious B.I.G.
- Mary J. Blige
Visual Arts
Includes painting, sculpture, pottery, photography, posters, etc.
* You can look at either a specific work of art, a movement, an artist or any combination of the above.

- Native American Art
  - Grant Wood
    - American Gothic
  - Walker Evans
  - George Catlin paintings
    - Depiction of Native Americans
  - Art in New Orleans
    - After Katrina
  - Georgia O’Keeffe
  - Ansel Adams
    - Collection about Japanese internment
  - John Muir
  - Diane Arbus
Architecture

* While you might find lots of sources about architecture, remember you are looking at it through a humanities lens.

- Anasazi Cliff Dwellings
- Southern Architecture
  - New Orleans
    - French Quarter
    - Rebuilding after Katrina
- Prairie School
  - Frank Lloyd Wright
- St. Louis Gateway Arch/Jefferson National Expansion Memorial