

# Northeast Lakeview College LRC

## Resource Guide – Film Criticism

[www.alamo.edu/nlc/library](http://www.alamo.edu/nlc/library)

### What is “film criticism”?

Film criticism is writing that analyzes, interprets, and evaluates motion pictures. True film criticism is written by scholars who take an academic approach to the subject, and is most often published in books or scholarly journals. Film criticism will sometimes address a rather specific aspect of a film, or focus on the work of a particular director or genre.

### What are “film reviews”?

Film reviews are written for the general public and are usually less substantive and academic than film criticism. Film reviews are often written by journalists and assess the entertainment and cultural significance of a current motion picture. Most instructors will prefer that you use *film criticism* when writing a research paper, rather than film reviews – be sure to clarify this with your instructor.

### GETTING STARTED USING THE ONLINE CATALOG – Books & More!

<http://library.alamo.edu/search/X>

Use the Online Catalog to find materials owned by NLC, SAC, PAC, SPC, and NWV. You can identify e-books, physical books, periodical titles, media items, and government documents.

By doing an ADVANCED KEYWORD search, you can specify a specific college, a specific type of material, or a combination of criteria by using BOOLEAN connectors *AND*, *OR*, and *AND NOT*.

When searching for film criticism, try entering the name of the film or director as **Subject:**, for example, Subject: Hitchcock, Alfred.

The screenshot displays the online catalog search interface for Alamo Community Colleges. At the top, it lists the colleges: Northeast Lakeview College, Northwest Vista College, Palo Alto College, St. Philip's College, and San Antonio College. The search interface includes a 'Keyword' tab and a search form for 'Advanced Keyword Search'. The form has a 'SUBJECT:' dropdown menu set to 'Hitchcock, Alfred', and three 'Any Field:' dropdown menus. There are 'And' connectors between the search fields. On the right side, there are sections for 'Other Searches' (Basic Keyword Search, Form/Genre Search, Author and Title Search, Government Documents, Course reserves, ISBN/ISSN) and 'Search Tips' (My Record, Featured item lists, Search, Help).

Film criticism can be tricky to find. It may be unusual to find an entire book about a particular film. Film criticism can be hidden within other books, such as those which

discuss History or Literature of the time period. If you are researching a work of literature which has been made into a motion picture, try looking for a book about the work itself.

For general books about Film Criticism, try **Subject: motion pictures** or **Subject: film criticism**. “**Subject:**” searches within the subject field only and helps to narrow your search results by producing fewer matches, for example:

film criticism limited to Northeast Lakeview College – 110 results

Subject: film criticism limited to Northeast Lakeview College - 30 results

Use **AND** to narrow your search, for example:

Subject: film criticism **AND** noir – 10 results

Subject: film criticism **AND** femin\* - 4 results (use \* to indicate truncation for 1-5 characters, for example, femin\* will find feminism, feminist, etc.)

Multiple words not in quotes are searched first as a **phrase**. Results are shown with any phrase matches and then with the words searched individually but “**ANDed**” together. To narrow your search to only a specific phrase, enclose it in quotation marks, for example: *horror films* is a different search than “*horror films*”

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS

The following books in the NLC Reference section may be particularly helpful for background information regarding film research:

*Schirmer Encyclopedia of Film*: REF PN1993.45 G65 2007 (4 volumes)

*The New Biographical Dictionary of Film*: REF PN1998.2 .T49 2002

*Cinema Studies: The Key Concepts*: PN1993.45 H36 2006

*A Short History of Film*: PN1993.5 .A1 D53 2008

Be sure to check out other nearby titles on the shelf as well!

## GETTING STARTED USING ELECTRONIC DATABASES – Articles & More!

[http://www.alamo.edu/nlc/library/t\\_Electronic%20Databases.htm](http://www.alamo.edu/nlc/library/t_Electronic%20Databases.htm)

Use the databases that are most appropriate for your subject. Some databases are broad and cross field disciplines, whereas others are more focused on a particular subject area. Click on a particular subject to take you to the appropriate list of databases. Several databases could be helpful for film research:

- [Academic Search Complete](#) or [Academic OneFile](#) – These two interdisciplinary databases cover a wide range of topics, including film. They contain content from journals such as *Film & History*, *Film Comment*, *Film Criticism*, *Historical Journal of Film*, *Radio & Television*, *Literature Film Quarterly*, and more.
- [MLA International Bibliography](#) – This literature database also indexes some film journals.
- [JSTOR](#) – This is another interdisciplinary database with film journal content, especially helpful for historical film criticism.

- [Biography Resource Center](#) - This database is helpful for obtaining biographical information about the lives of directors, producers, authors, actors, etc.
- [New York Times Historical \(1851–2005\)](#) – This is a good resource for historical film reviews. Adding the year the film was released may help to locate an original review.

### Academic Search Complete

This database defaults to the **Advanced Search**, which allows you to enter up to 3 pieces of information. Use the BOOLEAN connectors AND, OR, NOT to enter a specific search. Try searching for the name of your film plus any other pertinent information.

The screenshot shows the EBSCO Academic Search Complete search page. At the top, there are navigation tabs: "New Search", "Publications", "Subject Terms", "Cited References", and "More". A "Sign In to" link is on the right. Below the tabs, the search bar is active, showing "Searching: Academic Search Complete" and a "Choose Databases" link. The search input area contains three rows: the first row has "The Godfather" in a text box and "Select a Field (optional)" in a dropdown; the second row has "and" in a dropdown, "Coppola, Francis Ford" in a text box, and "SU Subject Terms" in a dropdown; the third row has "and" in a dropdown, an empty text box, and "Select a Field (optional)" in a dropdown. There are "Search" and "Clear" buttons to the right of the first row, and an "Add Row" link below the third row. At the bottom, there are links for "Basic Search", "Advanced Search", "Visual Search", "Search History/Alerts", and "Preferences".

The results are usually broken down by type of material: Academic Journals, Magazines, Newspapers, etc. on the side panel. Choose Academic Journals to view only scholarly results.

### JSTOR

This database also defaults to the **Advanced Search**, but is not searchable by the Subject field. Try searching for the name of your film in the **full-text** field and limiting the **Type** to **Article**.

The screenshot shows the JSTOR search page. At the top, there is a logo and the tagline "Trusted archives for scholarship". Below that are navigation tabs: "SEARCH", "BROWSE", "ABOUT", "PARTICIPATE", "RESOURCES", and "MyJSTOR". A message says "New Collections Available: photographs, manuscripts, speeches, maps, pamphlets, books... Learn More". Below that are buttons for "Basic Search", "Advanced Search", and "Article Locator". The "Advanced Search" section is active, showing "View Tutorial" and "Search Help" links. The search input area contains four rows: the first row has "Indiana Jones" in a text box, "full-text" in a dropdown, and "AND" in a dropdown; the second row has an empty text box, "full-text" in a dropdown, and "AND" in a dropdown; the third row has an empty text box, "full-text" in a dropdown, and "AND" in a dropdown; the fourth row has an empty text box and "full-text" in a dropdown. There is a checkbox for "Search for links to articles outside of JSTOR" with a question mark icon. Below that is a "Search" button. At the bottom, there is a "Limit to:" section with a "Type:" label and checkboxes for "Article" (checked), "Review", "Editorial", and "Pamphlet".

You can also scroll down on the page and limit by **Discipline(s) and/or Journal(s) = Film Studies**.

▶  **Film Studies** (7 journals)

### [New York Times Historical \(1851-2005\)](#)

Again, this database defaults to the **Advanced Search**. Try entering the name of your film in quotes and limiting the **Date range** to the release year. You are likely to find more film *reviews* here rather than film *criticism*, but original film reviews can often be a helpful source.

## ProQuest

Basic **Advanced** Publications My Research  
0 marked items

Databases selected: ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1851 - 2005)

**Advanced Search** Tools: [Search Tips](#)

"Wizard of Oz"	Citation and abstract
AND	Citation and document text
AND	Citation and document text

[Add a row](#) | [Remove a row](#) **Search** **Clear**

Date range:  On this date:

Before this date:

From:  To:

## FINDING FULLTEXT USING A TO Z ONLINE JOURNAL LOCATOR

If fulltext is not available for a particular article, use the A to Z Journal Locator to find out if it is fulltext in another database.

<https://proxy.nlc.alamo.edu:4443/login?url=http://atoz.ebsco.com/Search.asp?id=8525>

## ONLINE RESOURCES

A wealth of film-related information is available online, but be sure to evaluate the quality of any online source before using it. Helpful websites include:

- **Film Literature Index:** <http://webapp1.dlib.indiana.edu/fli/index.jsp> - Annually indexes 150 film and television periodicals, from scholarly to popular, from 30 countries cover-to-cover and 200 other periodicals selectively for articles on film and television. Contains approximately 700,000 citations to articles, film reviews and book reviews published between 1976-2001.
- **Internet Movie Database (IMDB)** - <http://www.imdb.com/> - Online resource for information related to movies, actors, television shows, etc.
- **Movie Review Query Engine (MRQE)** - <http://www.mrqe.com/> - Large index of film reviews published online