Why, When and How to Cite Your References in a Media Studies Essay

1. Introduction

- This is a guide to the basic elements of academic citation for essays in Media Studies. It tells you why you must provide proper references for academic work, when you should do so, and finally outlines the two most common methods for doing so.

- Different academic disciplines often have different rules about how you should format your references. If you are doing any courses outside of Media Studies, you should check with the lecturers of those courses to find out if there are any specific rules about how they require you to format your citations.

- However, within Media Studies at RMIT there is no single required format – as long as you are consistent in the style you use, and you include all of the necessary information in your citations, this will be acceptable.

- This is no more than an introduction to the basic essentials, and does not attempt to cover all eventualities. For more detailed information about specific citation styles, you should refer to the relevant style guide (i.e., the MLA style guide, or the Harvard style guide). Many of these are available in the library.

- Alternatively, there are a wide variety of on-line guides to specific referencing styles available. Search on the net for the specific referencing style guide (i.e., MLA, or Harvard, etc.). Make sure that the site you are looking at has been put together by a reputable University.

2. Why

- The full and proper citation of your sources is required in academic work for two main reasons;

- Firstly, it acknowledges your intellectual debt to the authors whose work you make use of. Failure to acknowledge that debt (otherwise known as plagiarism) is not only intellectually dishonest; it is also a form of theft.

- Secondly, proper citation of the work you draw on allows your reader to follow up on those sources themselves, in order to further evaluate the validity of your arguments, or to explore the topic in more depth for themselves.
3. *When*

- You must provide a full reference every time you make use of the words or ideas of others. The most obvious example is a direct quotation from an author. The same applies when you paraphrase a specific section of an author’s work (when you restate their ideas in your own words).

- A more complex example is where you make use of an author’s arguments without drawing directly on a specific sentence or section in their work for your inspiration. In all cases you must make it explicitly clear to your reader both *what* it is in your work that has been influenced by the work of others, and *where* they can find that material for themselves.

- It follows from this that most factual claims also require a citation indicating where that information was found (i.e. if you state that “the top grossing film in Australia in 1999 was *The Phantom Menace*”, you must tell the reader how you know this to be the case.).

  *Hint:* When you are doing research for your essays, you must keep scrupulous records of *all* the material you read, indicating clearly to yourself exactly where all of your notes come from, right up to and including the page they appear on in their original source. If you don’t do this, you will never be able to keep track of where the words and ideas you are making use of come from, and can very easily lose sight of what is your own work and what is the work of others.

4. *How*

- There are two main styles of citation in common use: the footnote style, and the in-text, or parenthetical, citation style. Either is acceptable, but you must stay consistently with one or the other style within any given essay – you cannot alternate between them or use a mixture of each. Both styles require you to make a note in the body of your essay indicating the specific part or parts that have been influenced by the work of others (a footnote for the footnote style, a note in parenthesis for the in-text style). This note then directs the reader to a full citation of the publication details of the work in question. If you draw on a particular work more than once, you must note every time that you do so.

- Each note must indicate clearly to the reader exactly what and how much in your work has been influenced by the author you are citing. The clearest and most direct way to
do this is to quote directly from that author, and place your note immediately after the quote.

- It is also permissible to paraphrase the words of others if this will aid the clarity of expression and/or argument in your essay. However, this does make it harder to make it clear to the reader what in a sentence is your work, and what is the work of others.

  **Hint:** To paraphrase is to restate someone else’s ideas *in your own words*. This does not mean just changing a word or two here and there, or changing the order of the words slightly. If that’s all you want to do then use a direct quote instead. Simply making minor alterations and then passing it off as your own words is a form of plagiarism, even if you acknowledge the source of the idea. Either quote directly, or substantially rephrase the idea you wish to use.

- Most of the time it will be sufficient to place your note at the end of the relevant sentence. However, sometimes a single sentence will contain a mixture of your own ideas and the ideas of others in paraphrased form. In this case, place your note indicating the authorship of the relevant idea at the end of the clause within which the idea appears, rather than at the end of a sentence.

- It is *not* acceptable to place a note at the end of a paragraph indicating that ‘something somewhere’ in that paragraph comes from the author in question. This fails to distinguish between your work and the work you draw on, and thus becomes a form of plagiarism.

  **Hint:** If it is necessary to make a minor alteration to a quotation, indicate the omission by an ellipsis (…), e.g., “I think it is important to hold onto this idea of truth as a fragmentary shard, perhaps especially at the moment we as a culture have begun to realise…that it is not guaranteed.”

  Anything added to a quotation by you is placed in square brackets, e.g. “It was only then that she [Josephine] could see the situation clearly.”

5. **Footnote Style**

- This style uses a series of numbers within the body of the essay to direct the reader to a corresponding numbered entry either at the foot of the page or at the end of the document, which will contain the full publication details of the relevant item, including the page number the specific quote or idea appears on in that source.
• If the numbered entry is at the foot of the page it is a footnote; if it is at the end of the document it is an endnote. For convenience’s sake I will be using the term ‘footnote’ to refer to both footnotes and endnotes.

• A footnote should contain the following information, in this order;

  ➢ The author or authors’ name, (surname first, then given name), followed by a full stop.
  ➢ The title of the article, in inverted commas, followed by a full stop.
  ➢ The name of the book or journal it appears in, underlined, followed by a full stop;
  ➢ The names of any editor(s) and or translator(s), preceded by the abbreviation Trans. (for ‘Translated by’), and followed by a full stop.
  ➢ If the work in question is a book, by the name of the publisher, followed by a colon, and then the city or cities in which the publisher is located. If the publisher is a University Press, this may be abbreviated to UP. For example, Johns Hopkins University Press may be abbreviated to Johns Hopkins UP, and University of Queensland Press may be abbreviated to U of Queensland P.

  or

  ➢ If it is a journal, the Volume number followed by a comma, and then the Issue number of the journal, followed by a comma.
  ➢ The year in which it was published (if it is a journal article, and the journal issue specifies the month or season in which it was published, you should list the month / season and year)
  ➢ The page number or numbers on which the relevant material appears in that book or journal.

• This is what the full footnote citation for a book looks like;


This is what it looks like for a journal;

  2 Turner, Graeme. ‘Whatever Happened to National Identity? Film and the Nation in the 1990’s.’ Metro, no.100, Summer ‘94/’95, 34

• Once you have cited a work in full in the first instance, you may abbreviate each later footnote citing that same work in the following manner;

  ➢ When the citation comes from the same source as the one immediately before it, you may abbreviate it in the following manner – ‘ibid., 37’. ‘ibid.’ is short for ‘ibidem’, meaning more or less “in the same work, cited just above”.

  ➢ When the citation comes from the same source as one cited previously, but not immediately before it, you may abbreviate like this ‘Turner, op. cit., 37’. ‘op. cit.’ is short for ‘opere citato’, which translates more or less as ‘in the work cited’.
• So an example of the footnote style of citation at work would look something like this;

Moreover, Tom O'Regan’s comment that much of the humour in THE ADVENTURES OF BARRY McKENZIE (1972) “...comes from McKenzie’s colourful slang for people, beer and bodily functions”\(^1\) could be applied directly to THE ADVENTURES OF PRISCILLA, QUEEN OF THE DESERT (1994). Indeed, in his book on the making of the film, producer Al Clark proudly lists a string of the film’s linguistic idiosyncrasies which had caused trouble for sub-titlers attempting to translate the film into other languages, including ‘ring pirate’, ‘bats for both teams’, ‘pink bits’ and ‘hide the sausage’ to name a few\(^2\).

According to Andrew Ross, the word camp is derived from the French for ‘to posture or flaunt’\(^3\). Ross, following Mark Booth, suggests that “...camp belongs to the history of the ‘self-presentation’ of arriviste groups. Because of their marginality, and lack of inherited cultural capital, these groups parody their subordinate or uncertain social status in ‘a self-mocking abdication of any pretensions to power’\(^4\). Phrases like ‘marginality’, and ‘lack of cultural capital’ would seem to be central to the kind of anxieties surrounding our perceptions of Australia’s place in the context of world (film) culture. It should come as no surprise then that the ocker films of the 70’s have been described as a “...‘rewriting’ of the residual Australian as a figure verging on the camp.”\(^5\)

1 O'Regan, Tom. ‘Cinema Oz: The Ocker Films.’ The Australian Screen (ed. Albert Moran & Tom O'Regan). Penguin: Sydney, 1989, 76-77
4 ibid., p146
5 O'Regan, op.cit., p78

6. In-Text (parenthetical) Style
• An alternative to the footnote style of citation is the in-text, or parenthetical style. In this approach, rather than a number referring you to a footnote at the bottom of the page, you place in parentheses the minimum information needed to direct the reader to the correct citation in a list of ‘Works Cited’ at the end of your essay. The in-text parenthesis must also contain the page number the relevant material appears on in the cited text.

• This means that the information in parenthesis will vary according to the context of the sentence in which it appears.
• For example, if you mention the author’s name in the relevant sentence, you will usually only need to put the page number in parentheses. For example;

Siegfried Kracauer also makes a point of the enthusiasm with which ‘the ripple of leaves stirred by the wind’ was received in discussion of the Lumière’s work (31).

• All your reader need do is go to your list of works cited (which will be at the end of your essay) to find the full citation for Kracauer’s book, which, with the page reference you have already given in parenthesis, will enable them to track down the reference themselves.

• If you don’t mention the author’s name in the text, simply place it in the parenthetical note, like this;

This whole, however, cannot be understood as a set; a set is a closed system of definite parts, whereas the whole is open and has no parts, since “Relation is not a property of objects, it is always external to its terms” (Deleuze, 10).

• If you have more than one work by the same author in your list of works cited, simply add the relevant year of publication to the information in parentheses to differentiate between them.

• If you refer to more than one work by the same author published in the same year, differentiate between them by placing a lower case letter after the year of publication in both the parenthetical reference and the entry in the list of works cited.

• Thus the following parenthetical references (Deleuze, 1991a), (Deleuze, 1991b) refer to two separate works by the same author published in the same year. Even though (Deleuze, 1987) refers to a work by the same author, it does not require a letter after the year of publication, as the reader can tell immediately that it refers to another work by the same author, published in a different year.

• If you are ever in doubt as to how much information to put in parentheses, err on the side of caution and put in more information rather than less.

7. The List of Works Cited

• The in-text style of citation requires you to include a list of works cited at the end of your essay. In this list you must include the full publication details of every work you refer to in
your essay. It is called a ‘List of Works Cited’ rather than a ‘Bibliography’ because this enables you to properly acknowledge a variety of sources beyond books and journal articles. Such sources may include (but are not limited to) films, television programs, material off the radio, newspaper articles, interviews, and so on.

- A brief introduction to citation such as this cannot provide examples for all the different possible kinds of texts you could draw on for your essay, but as a general rule you should include at a minimum the name of the author, the title of the text, the place of publication, and the date of publication. Remember that one of the major aims of a citation is to allow the reader to find and examine the relevant work for him or herself.

- Not all versions of the footnote style of citation require a list of works cited, as the full publication details for each text cited are included in the footnote for the first instance of its citation. Some, however, do. Refer to the style guide for the specific style you are using for clarification on this matter. As a general rule, you should include a list of works cited at the end of your essays even if you are using a footnote style of citation, for the convenience of the person reading your work.

- If the sample of the footnote style of referencing used above were to be converted to parenthetical style, it would look like this;

> Moreover, Tom O'Regan’s comment that much of the humour in THE ADVENTURES OF BARRY MCKENZIE (1976) “..comes from McKenzie’s colourful slang for people, beer and bodily functions” (76-77) could be applied directly to THE ADVENTURES OF PRISCILLA, QUEEN OF THE DESERT (1994). Indeed, in his book on the making of the film, producer Al Clark proudly lists a string of the film’s linguistic idiosyncrasies which had caused trouble for sub-titlers attempting to translate the film into other languages, including ‘ring pirate’, ‘bats for both teams’, ‘pink bits’ and ‘hide the sausage’ to name a few (13).

> According to Andrew Ross, the word camp is derived from the French for ‘to posture or flaunt’ (145). Ross, following Mark Booth, suggests that “..camp belongs to the history of the ‘self-presentation’ of arriviste groups. Because of their marginality, and lack of inherited cultural capital, these groups parody their subordinate or uncertain social status in ‘a self-mocking abdication of any pretensions to power’” (146). Phrases like ‘marginality’, and ‘lack of cultural capital’ would seem to be central to the kind of anxieties surrounding our perceptions of Australia’s place in the context of world (film) culture. It should come as no surprise then that the ocker films of the 70’s have been described as a “..‘rewriting’ of the residual Australian as a figure verging on the camp.” (O’Reagan, 78)
List of Works Cited:

Adventures of Barry McKenzie, Dir. Bruce Beresford. Australia, 1972

Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert, Dir. Stephan Elliot. Australia, 1994


8. Web Citations

- Resources drawn from the World Wide Web must be cited in the same way as any other text. Adrian Miles has written a guide on how to format your Web citations, which can be found at <http://hypertext.rmit.edu.au/publications/web_citation.html>. Alternatively, if you are making use of a specific style guide that you have borrowed from the library or found on the WWW (i.e., the MLA style guide, or the Harvard style guide), use the Web citation format that your specific style guide specifies.

9. Sample Citations (compiled by Roberta Munro)

- A book by a single or joint author(s) or editor(s):


- An Edition or Republished Book:


- An essay/story/poem/article in a collection by the same author:

• An essay/article/story/poem in a collection edited by a different person:


• An article in a Journal:


**Note:** It is not necessary to write “vol” for the volume number or “no” for the number of a journal. If a journal has both a volume number and a number, indicate the volume number first, followed by a decimal point, followed by the number (see Turner and Bird example above.)

• An article in a newspaper or other periodical which does not have volume numbers:


• A Play or Other Performance:


• A Film

On Our Selection. Dir. Ken Hall. Australia, 1932

• A Recording:


• An Unpublished Lecture:

• An Advertisement: