

chicago manual film studies citation chicago

chicago manual film studies citation chicago is essential for academics and students navigating the complexities of film scholarship. Properly citing films and related materials ensures academic integrity, allows readers to locate sources, and contributes to the ongoing discourse within film studies. This comprehensive guide will delve into the nuances of applying the Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) to film studies, covering everything from basic film citations to more specialized sources like interviews, screenplays, and critical essays. We will explore the two primary citation systems within CMOS—notes-bibliography and author-date—and demonstrate how to apply them effectively to film-related scholarship. Understanding these guidelines will equip you to produce well-documented and credible research in the field of cinema.

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Understanding Chicago Style for Film Studies

The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) is a widely respected style guide that provides comprehensive rules for writing, citation, and formatting in academic and professional contexts. While it is not exclusively designed for film studies, its flexible and detailed guidelines can be effectively adapted to this discipline. Film studies, by its nature, draws upon a diverse range of source materials, including films themselves, critical essays, interviews, screenplays, and historical documents. A clear and consistent citation method is paramount for presenting research credibly and facilitating scholarly dialogue.

CMOS offers two distinct citation systems: the notes-bibliography system and the author-date system. Both systems serve the purpose of attributing sources and providing readers with the necessary information to locate them. The

choice between these two often depends on the conventions of a particular academic field or the requirements of a specific publication or institution. For film studies, understanding how to apply either system to the unique materials encountered in cinematic research is crucial for any scholar aiming for clarity and accuracy.

The Notes-Bibliography System for Film Citations

The notes-bibliography system, often favored in the humanities, uses footnotes or endnotes to provide citations within the text. A corresponding bibliography at the end of the work lists all sources cited. This system allows for detailed explanatory notes alongside citation information, which can be particularly useful for discussing specific scenes, directorial choices, or historical context related to a film. The in-text citation is typically a superscript number linked to a note.

When citing a film, the initial note (whether a footnote or endnote) requires specific components to identify the work accurately. These components generally include the film's title, director, producer (or other key personnel), production company, release year, and the specific medium. Subsequent citations of the same film can be shortened, using a simplified format once the full citation has been established.

Basic Film Citation Format (Notes-Bibliography)

For the initial note in the notes-bibliography system, the standard format for citing a film generally follows this structure: Title of Film, directed by Director's Name, produced by Producer's Name, Production Company, Year of Release, Medium (e.g., DVD, Blu-ray, streaming service). The title of the film should be italicized.

For example, a full note for the classic film *Citizen Kane* might look like this: *Citizen Kane*, directed by Orson Welles, produced by George Schaefer, RKO Radio Pictures, 1941, Blu-ray. This provides essential details for identification. When citing a specific scene or moment from the film, you would also include the timestamp. For instance: *Citizen Kane*, directed by Orson Welles, produced by George Schaefer, RKO Radio Pictures, 1941, Blu-ray, 00:15:30-00:17:05. This level of detail is critical for scholarly analysis of cinematic works.

Citing Specific Film Elements (Notes-Bibliography)

When referring to specific aspects of a film within the notes-bibliography system, such as a particular actor's performance, a musical cue, or a visual motif, the citation in the note should be as precise as possible. If you are referencing a specific moment or scene, including the timestamp is highly recommended. For example, if discussing the famous "Rosebud" reveal, the note might read: Citizen Kane, 01:40:10. The full bibliographic information for the film would appear in the bibliography.

In the case of citing a specific quote from a film, it is standard practice to include the timestamp. For instance, if a character utters a memorable line at the 25-minute mark, the note would specify this: The Godfather, directed by Francis Ford Coppola, produced by Albert S. Ruddy, Paramount Pictures, 1972, DVD, 00:25:15. This allows readers to quickly locate the exact moment being discussed, enhancing the rigor of the analysis.

The Author-Date System for Film Citations

The author-date system, commonly used in the social sciences, places parenthetical citations directly within the text, typically including the author's last name and the year of publication. A reference list at the end of the work provides full bibliographic details for all in-text citations. This system prioritizes conciseness within the body of the text, making it easier for readers to follow the narrative flow while still ensuring all sources are accountable.

For film citations within the author-date system, the parenthetical in-text citation will typically include the director's last name and the film's release year. This shorthand allows for quick reference. The corresponding entry in the reference list will then provide the complete details necessary for identification and retrieval, mirroring the information required in the notes-bibliography system but presented in a different structural context.

Basic Film Citation Format (Author-Date)

In the author-date system, the parenthetical in-text citation for a film generally uses the director's last name and the film's release year. For example, a sentence might end with: (Welles 1941). This is followed by a reference list entry that includes the full film details. The reference list entry would include the film's title (*italicized*), director, producer, production company, and release year.

The corresponding reference list entry for Citizen Kane would be formatted

as: Welles, Orson, dir. *Citizen Kane*. Produced by George Schaefer. RKO Radio Pictures, 1941. This mirrors the foundational information required in the notes-bibliography system but adheres to the author-date structure's conventions for brevity within the text and completeness in the reference list.

Citing Specific Film Elements (Author-Date)

When citing specific elements of a film in the author-date system, precision is still key. For direct quotations or specific scene references, the parenthetical citation can be augmented with timestamps. For instance, a sentence might read: The iconic scene where Kane reveals his past is deeply symbolic (Welles 1941, 01:40:10). This provides the reader with immediate access to the exact point of reference within the film.

For longer analyses or discussions that require the reader to pinpoint precise moments, including the timestamp is vital. The reference list entry for the film will provide the full details, but the in-text citation helps navigate the cinematic source material efficiently. Therefore, even in the concise author-date system, detailed referencing for specific film moments is a best practice.

Citing Film-Related Scholarly Works

Beyond the films themselves, scholarly research in film studies frequently engages with critical essays, books, and articles written about cinema. Properly citing these sources is as crucial as citing the films. The Chicago Manual of Style provides detailed guidelines for citing various forms of published and unpublished academic work. These guidelines ensure that the theoretical frameworks, historical analyses, and critical interpretations you draw upon are clearly attributed to their original authors.

Whether you are using the notes-bibliography or author-date system, the core principles of attribution remain the same: identify the author, title of the work, publication details, and specific location of the information being cited. For scholarly works, this typically involves the author's name, the title of the book or article (properly formatted with italics for books and quotation marks for articles), the publisher, publication year, and page numbers.

Citing Books on Film

When citing a book on film studies using the notes-bibliography system, the

full citation in a note includes the author's name, the full title of the book (*italicized*), and the publication information (place of publication, publisher, year). For subsequent citations, a shortened form with author's last name, shortened title, and page number is used. In the bibliography, the author's last name appears first, followed by the full title and publication details.

Using the author-date system, the in-text citation would be (Author's Last Name Year, Page Number). The reference list entry would be structured similarly to the bibliography entry in the notes-bibliography system, with the author's last name first. For example, a reference list entry might be: Bordwell, David, and Kristin Thompson. *Film Art: An Introduction*. 13th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill Education, 2020.

Citing Journal Articles on Film

Citing journal articles in film studies involves identifying the author of the article, the article title (in quotation marks), the journal title (*italicized*), the volume and issue number, the publication year, and the page numbers. For the notes-bibliography system, this information is presented in the footnote/endnote and then a full entry in the bibliography. For the author-date system, it's a parenthetical citation in the text followed by a reference list entry.

A typical note-bibliography citation for a journal article might be: Sarah K. Rosen, "The Poetics of Space in Film Noir," *Cinema Journal* 45, no. 2 (Winter 2006): 78. The reference list entry would mirror this information, with the author's last name first. For author-date, the in-text citation would be (Rosen 2006, 78), and the reference list entry would be structured accordingly.

Citing Screenplays and Scripts

Screenplays and scripts represent a unique source material in film studies, offering insights into the filmmaking process, dialogue development, and narrative structure before the visual translation to the screen. Chicago style provides guidelines for citing these often-unpublished or limited-release documents. Precision in citation is key, as different versions of a screenplay may exist, and attributing the correct draft is important for scholarly accuracy.

When citing a screenplay, it is essential to include the title, the screenwriter(s), and information about the specific version or draft you are referencing, along with its date. This helps distinguish it from other drafts or the final shooting script. The medium or availability of the script (e.g.,

private collection, online archive, published version) should also be noted where relevant.

Notes-Bibliography System for Screenplays

In the notes-bibliography system, a note for a screenplay would typically include the screenwriter's name, the title of the screenplay (italicized), and details about its availability or publication. For example: Quentin Tarantino, *Pulp Fiction* (Screenplay, 1994). If you are referring to a specific passage, you would include scene numbers or page numbers if they are consistently formatted. If the screenplay is published, the publication details would be included, similar to citing a book.

For a published screenplay, the citation might look like: Quentin Tarantino, *Pulp Fiction: A Screenplay* (New York: Hyperion, 1994). In the bibliography, this would be listed under Tarantino, Quentin. *Pulp Fiction: A Screenplay*. New York: Hyperion, 1994. This level of detail ensures that readers can access the exact version of the script you are referencing for your analysis.

Author-Date System for Screenplays

Using the author-date system, an in-text citation for a screenplay might refer to the screenwriter and the year of the draft or publication. For example: (Tarantino 1994). The reference list entry would then provide the full details of the screenplay, similar to the bibliography entry in the notes-bibliography system.

The reference list entry for *Pulp Fiction* would be structured as: Tarantino, Quentin. *Pulp Fiction: A Screenplay*. New York: Hyperion, 1994. If referencing a specific scene or dialogue, and if scene or page numbers are available and consistent, you might include them in the parenthetical citation: (Tarantino 1994, Scene 42). This ensures clarity and allows readers to easily locate the referenced material within the script.

Citing Film Reviews and Essays

Film reviews and critical essays, whether published in academic journals, newspapers, magazines, or online platforms, are vital components of film studies research. They offer contemporary perspectives, historical critiques, and theoretical interventions. Chicago style provides clear instructions on how to cite these materials, ensuring that both journalistic and scholarly reviews are properly attributed and accessible to your readers.

The citation will vary depending on where the review or essay is published. For instance, a review in a daily newspaper will have a different citation format than an article in a peer-reviewed film journal. Paying close attention to the publication venue and the available bibliographic information is crucial for accurate referencing.

Published Reviews and Essays

For a review or essay published in a newspaper or magazine using the notes-bibliography system, the note would typically include the reviewer's name, the title of the review/essay (in quotation marks), the name of the publication (*italicized*), the date of publication, and the page number(s). For example: Manohla Dargis, "A Haunting Tale of Love and Loss," *The New York Times*, November 10, 2023, sec. Arts, C1. The bibliography entry would follow a similar structure.

In the author-date system, the in-text citation would be (Reviewer's Last Name Year, Page Number). The reference list entry would be structured to clearly identify the reviewer, the article title, and the publication details. For an online review, the URL and access date might also be included if the material is not archived or paginated in a standard way.

Online Film Criticism

Citing online film criticism requires attention to the specific platform and the availability of stable links. For websites and blogs, include the author's name (if available), the title of the piece (in quotation marks), the name of the website (*italicized*), the publication date, and the URL. Include an access date if the content is likely to change or disappear. This ensures verifiability for your readers.

For example, in a note: If the author is not listed, you would start with the title. Otherwise: Name of Critic, "Title of Review/Essay," Name of Website, Month Day, Year, URL. For author-date: (Critic's Last Name Year). The reference list entry would contain all these details, including the URL and access date. Consistency in format, whether for print or digital sources, is paramount for Chicago style.

Citing Interviews and Archival Materials

Interviews and archival materials are indispensable for film studies research, providing firsthand accounts, contextual information, and primary source evidence. Chicago style offers guidelines for citing these unique

sources, which often do not fit neatly into standard book or article formats. The key is to provide enough information for a reader to understand the nature of the source and, ideally, to locate it themselves.

For interviews, this means identifying the interviewee, the interviewer, the date and location of the interview, and its form (e.g., personal interview, recorded interview, email correspondence). For archival materials, it involves specifying the collection, the repository, and the relevant documents or items within that collection.

Personal and Recorded Interviews

When citing a personal interview you conducted, the note should include the interviewee's name, the description of the interview (e.g., "personal interview," "recorded interview"), and the date it took place. For example: Interview with Jane Doe, July 15, 2023. If the interview was recorded, you would specify the format and location of the recording. In the bibliography, such personal communications are typically not listed unless they are crucial and have been formally archived.

For interviews published or archived by others, treat them as you would other published or archived materials. If it's a transcribed interview in a book, cite it as a chapter or excerpt. If it's a recorded interview available online or on DVD, cite it with the relevant producer, distributor, and date information. The author-date system follows similar principles, with parenthetical citations referencing the interviewee or source, and the reference list providing full details.

Archival Materials and Collections

Citing archival materials requires meticulous attention to detail. You need to identify the specific item, the collection it belongs to, the name of the archive or repository, and its location. For example, a note might read: "Letter from Alfred Hitchcock to Alma Reville, October 2, 1958, Alfred Hitchcock Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C." This provides all the necessary information for retrieval.

In the bibliography, this information would be presented in a structured format, often starting with the archive name, followed by the collection, and then the specific item. For author-date, the in-text citation would be a concise reference to the archive and item, with the full details in the reference list. Proper citation of archival materials is crucial for validating your research and demonstrating access to primary sources.

Common Pitfalls and Best Practices in Film Citation

Navigating the intricacies of Chicago style for film studies can present challenges, leading to common errors in citation. These often stem from the unique nature of film as a source material, which can be treated as a text, a performance, or a cultural artifact. Being aware of these pitfalls and adhering to best practices can significantly improve the accuracy and credibility of your scholarly work.

One common mistake is inconsistency. Applying different citation formats for similar types of sources or within the same document can confuse readers and undermine the professionalism of your research. Another pitfall is insufficient detail; omitting key information like director, producer, or release year can make it difficult for readers to locate the specific film or material you are referencing.

Ensuring Consistency and Accuracy

The most crucial best practice is to maintain strict consistency throughout your document. Whether you choose the notes-bibliography or author-date system, apply its rules uniformly to all your film-related citations. Double-check every detail: spelling of names, titles, dates, and publication information. Even minor inaccuracies can detract from your credibility.

It is also advisable to consult the latest edition of the Chicago Manual of Style for the most current guidelines. Style guides are occasionally updated to reflect new technologies and scholarly practices. Furthermore, if you are submitting your work for publication or as part of a course requirement, always adhere to any specific formatting instructions provided by the publisher or instructor, as these may supersede general style guide recommendations.

Leveraging Timestamps and Specificity

For films, using timestamps is a powerful tool for precise referencing. Instead of broadly referring to a scene, providing the exact time segment allows readers to engage directly with the moment you are analyzing. This is particularly important for detailed close readings of cinematic techniques, dialogue, or visual compositions.

Beyond timestamps, be specific about the version of the film you are citing, especially if multiple cuts or restorations exist. Similarly, when citing

interviews or archival materials, provide as much identifying information as possible about the source's origin and form. This level of detail demonstrates thoroughness and enhances the verifiability of your research.

Conclusion: Mastering Chicago Style for Film Studies

Mastering the Chicago Manual of Style for film studies citation is an investment in the rigor and clarity of your academic work. By understanding and applying the principles of either the notes-bibliography or author-date system to the diverse materials encountered in cinematic research—from the films themselves to critical essays, screenplays, interviews, and archival documents—you equip yourself to contribute meaningfully to scholarly discourse.

The goal of consistent and accurate citation is not merely to follow rules, but to facilitate transparency, enable verification, and uphold academic integrity. As you continue your research in film studies, consistently referring to the Chicago Manual of Style and practicing these citation methods will become second nature, allowing your intellectual contributions to stand on a solid foundation of verifiable and well-attributed sources.

FAQ

Q: What is the primary difference between the notes-bibliography and author-date systems in the Chicago Manual of Style when citing films?

A: The notes-bibliography system uses footnotes or endnotes for in-text citations and a comprehensive bibliography at the end, allowing for explanatory notes. The author-date system uses parenthetical citations within the text (e.g., Director Year) and a reference list at the end.

Q: How do I cite a film in a note if I'm using the notes-bibliography system?

A: For a full note, you generally include the film's title (italicized), director, producer, production company, and release year. For example: *Citizen Kane*, directed by Orson Welles, produced by George Schaefer, RKO Radio Pictures, 1941, Blu-ray. Subsequent notes can be shortened.

Q: What information should be included in an author-date citation for a film?

A: In the text, the parenthetical citation typically includes the director's last name and the film's release year (e.g., Welles 1941). The reference list entry provides the full details: Welles, Orson, dir. *Citizen Kane*. Produced by George Schaefer. RKO Radio Pictures, 1941.

Q: How do I cite a specific scene or moment from a film using Chicago style?

A: Whether using notes-bibliography or author-date, you should include the timestamp for the specific scene or moment after the main film citation. For example, in a note: *Citizen Kane*, 00:15:30-00:17:05. In an author-date parenthetical: (Welles 1941, 00:15:30).

Q: When citing a screenplay, what details are most important to include?

A: It's crucial to include the screenwriter(s), the title of the screenplay (*italicized*), and information about the specific draft or version being cited, including its date. If it's a published screenplay, include publisher and publication details.

Q: How should I cite a film review published online?

A: For an online review, include the reviewer's name (if known), the title of the review (in quotation marks), the name of the website (*italicized*), the publication date, and the URL. Include an access date if the content is volatile.

Q: Can I include personal interviews in my bibliography when using Chicago style?

A: Generally, personal communications like interviews you've conducted are not included in the bibliography unless they have been formally archived. In the notes-bibliography system, you would describe the interview in a note (e.g., Interview with Jane Doe, July 15, 2023).

Q: What is the best practice for citing different versions or cuts of the same film?

A: When citing different versions, be as specific as possible in your citation, noting the version or director's cut explicitly. This ensures clarity and accuracy, especially if your analysis hinges on distinctions

between versions.

Q: How does Chicago style handle archival materials like letters or production documents?

A: For archival materials, the citation needs to be very detailed, specifying the item, the collection, the archive name, and its location. For example: Letter from Director X to Producer Y, Date, Collection Name, Archive, City, State.

Q: Is it acceptable to use shortened titles for films in subsequent notes or citations after the initial full citation?

A: Yes, Chicago style allows for shortened titles in subsequent notes (notes-bibliography system) or after the full entry in the reference list (author-date system) once the full information has been provided. This improves readability and conciseness.

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