

Dr. Alex E. Blazer

All Courses

8 May 2009

## MLA Style

This handout provides a snapshot of Modern Language Association formatting and citation style requirements for formal papers as defined in the seventh edition of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. Style rules are keyed to the *Handbook's* sections and pages. If you are an English major or minor, you should purchase the *MLA Handbook*. Formal papers and take-home exams that do not follow the MLA guidelines outlined here and the *Handbook* will be penalized; refer to your course syllabus for your particular course's penalties.

### 1 General Formatting (4 The Format of the Research Paper [115])

Your formal paper should use one inch margins (4.1 Margins [116]) and double-space the lines in Times New Roman 12 point font (4.2 Text Formatting [116]). Do not commence your paper with a title page; instead, provide a double-spaced heading (4.3 Heading and Title [116]) that includes your name (Jane Doe), your professor's name (Professor Blazer), the course number (English XXXX), and the date (8 May 2009) on the top left-hand corner. Then, while maintaining double-spacing, provide a centered paper title. Do not bold, italicize, underline or change the font size of the title. Do not add extra lines around the title or between paragraphs as Word 2007 is defaulted to do. Note that each page must have a running header (4.4 Page Numbers [117]), which includes your last name and page number, set one-half inch from the top of page and justified to the right margin. Do not manually type the header on each page; instead, use your word processing program to automatically insert a running header in the correct position on each page, or download an MLA styled paper template from our course site. Refer to the sample page included later in the handout.

A note about titles: italicize titles of books, plays, newspapers, magazines, films, television programs (3.6.2 Italicized Titles [88]) and put titles of short stories, poems, essays, book chapters, episodes of television programs, and lectures in quotes (3.6.3 Titles in Quotation

Marks [89]).

The general formatting rules are as follows:

- font: Times New Roman
- font size: 12 point
- margins: one inch
- spacing: double-spacing
- justification: left
- heading: your name  
your instructor's name  
the course number  
the date
- running header: your last name and page number,  
one-half inch from the top of the page and flush right
- titles of works:  
*italicize* book, play, newspaper, magazine, film, and television  
program titles  
“quotation marks” around short story, poem, book chapter, essay  
in book, newspaper article, magazine article, episode of  
television program, and lecture titles

## 2 Quoting

Next, let us discuss quoting (6 Documentation: Citing Sources in the Text) [213] and 3.7 Quotations [92]). Do use in-text parenthetical citations, but do not use footnotes. Only use endnotes if they are absolutely warranted and you discuss their use with me first. Note that quotes absolutely cannot stand alone grammatically as sentences. Quotes must be introduced; they must be attached to your own sentence, your own independent clause. Do not let the quote do all the analytical work. Quotes constitute illustrative evidence; your task is to analyze them. Introduce the passage, quote the passage, and then explain and interpret the passage thoroughly.

The author, source, and page number of the quote must be made clear to the reader, through context and/or parenthetical citation. If the source and author have already been provided or are provided in context of the introductory sentence or surrounding paragraph(s), simply cite the page number in parentheses after the closing quotation mark. This is called the parenthetical citation. Do not use the word *page* or *pages* or the abbreviation *p.* or *pp.* The following pages provide examples of how to quote prose, drama (including film and television), and poetry. Because the goal of these pages is to demonstrate correct quotation style, I will not be explaining the quotes and each type of quote will be set off in a new paragraph. In your own papers, you should never let the quote simply speak for itself, and you should never allow a quote to constitute an entire paragraph.

### 2.1 Prose: four lines or less of text (3.7.2 Prose [110])

A typical citation includes 1) an introduction to the quote punctuated by a comma or semicolon, 2) the quote itself distinguished by double quotation marks, 3) a parenthetical citation that includes the author's last name, if not already known, and page number of the text and 4) a period at the end, after the parenthetical citation. Generally speaking, you should make sure through surrounding context and/or parenthetical citation that your reader knows who the author and title of the work being quoted are. If you have already introduced the author and title of the work, either in the introduction to the quote or in surrounding context, then you can safely provide only the page number in the parenthetical citation. To illustrate the author's name in the parenthetical citation, Roquentin, the protagonist of *Nausea*, realizes that he exists in a void: "Now I knew: things are entirely what they appear to be—and behind them . . . there is nothing" (Sartre 96). To illustrate the author's name in the text, Roquentin, the protagonist of Jean-Paul Sartre's *Nausea*, realizes that he exists in a void: "Now I knew: things are entirely what they appear to be—and behind them . . . there is nothing" (96).

#### 2.1.1 Prose: more than four lines of text

If a quote occupies more than four lines of text of your paper (not the original source), you should turn it into a block quote. Start a new line, do not use quotation marks, indent the quote

one inch from the left-margin only (*not* the right margin), and place your period *before* the parenthetical citation. For example, the unnamed narrator of Angela Carter’s “Flesh and the Mirror” meditates upon the psychological effect of mirrors:

Mirrors are ambiguous things. The bureaucracy of the mirror issues me with a passport to the world; it shows me my appearance. But what use is a passport to an armchair traveler? Women and mirrors are in complicity with one another to evade the action I/she performs that shell cannot watch, the action with which I break out of the mirror, with which I assume my appearance. But *this* mirror refused to conspire with me; it was like the first mirror I’d ever seen. It reflected the embrace beneath it without the least guile. All it showed was inevitable. But I myself could never have dreamed it. (70)

## 2.2 Poetry (3.7.3 Poetry [95])

MLA format requires poetry be cited by line rather than page number. However, in papers for me, if a poem is more than two pages long and the edition does not provide line numbers, feel free to cite the page number rather than the lines.

### 2.2.1 Poetry: one or two lines

When quoting one or two lines of poetry, separate each line by a slash (/) and put the line numbers rather than the page number in the parenthetical citation. In “In the Waiting Room,” Elizabeth Bishop attempts to convince herself of her individuality: “But I felt: you are an *I*, / you are an *Elizabeth*” (60-61).

### 2.2.2 Poetry, three or more lines

When quoting three or more lines of poetry, indent the quotation one inch from the left margin, do not use quotation marks, and place the period before the parenthetical citation. If a line runs over, indent it an additional one-fourth inch or three spaces. Wary of writing, the speaker in “The Instruction Manual” daydreams of touring Mexico:

Not one of them has to worry about getting out this manual on schedule.

And, as my way is, I begin to dream, resting my elbows on the desk and leaning  
 out of the window a little,  
 Of dim Guadalajara! City of rose-colored flowers!  
 City I wanted most to see, and most did not see, in Mexico!  
 But I fancy I see, under the press of having to write the instruction manual,  
 Your public square, city, with its elaborate little bandstand! (Ashbery 8)

### 2.3 Drama, Film, and Television (3.7.4 Drama [96])

When quoting plays, screenplays, or teleplays that you have read in print, provide the page number. When quoting plays, films, or television programs that you have only watched (and thus do not have a page number), simply provide the title in the parenthetical citation, unless you have already provided the title in context. For example, Jack Lipnik asserts, “The writer is king here at Capitol Pictures” (*Barton Fink*). Provide the page number if you are quoting from a published script.

#### 2.3.1 Monologue

When quoting just one character, treat the quote as you would regular prose. Consequently, four or less lines of monologue are quoted as in-text citation while more than four lines of text are block quoted. For example, Estragon sets the tone and theme of *Waiting for Godot* with his opening line: “Nothing to be done” (Beckett 7). When quoting verse plays that provide line numbers in the margin, such as those by Shakespeare, your citation should include act, scene, and line numbers rather than page numbers. For example, Hamlet realizes, “the play’s the thing / Wherein I’ll catch the conscience of the King” (2.2.584-585).

#### 2.3.2 Dialogue

To quote more than four lines of dialogue in a play, film, or television program, capitalize and indent each character’s name one inch and follow it with a period. If a line runs over, indent the next line an additional one-fourth inch or three spaces:

CARDIN. What’s the matter, Martha?

MARTHA. Nothing.

CARDIN. (*His face is grave, his voice gentle.*) Yes, there is. For a long time you and I have had something to talk about. (Hellman 23)

### 3 The Works Cited Page (5.3 The List of Works Cited [129])

A Works Cited page for the quoted sources appears on the final page of this paper. The remaining pages of this handout detail the proper MLA citation format for annotated bibliographies and works cited pages; however, it only gives general rules, which I have categorized here as 1) print sources (books and periodicals), 2) film and television, and 3) electronic sources. When you come across a source that does not quite fit within these guidelines, check with the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* or me.

At the end of your paper, start a new page and title it Works Cited in the center of the page. Alphabetize your works cited page by authors' last names. Maintain double-spacing and normal fonts throughout.

#### 3.1 Books

Here is the information that is required in a book reference on the Works Cited page:

- the author's name
- the title of the chapter (if citing only one article or chapter)
- the title of the book
- the edition (if applicable)
- the editor's name (if applicable)
- the translator's name (if applicable)
- the place of publication
- the publisher
- the year
- the page numbers (if citing only one article or chapter)
- the medium of publication

##### 3.1.1 A Book by a Single Author (5.5.2 A Book by a Single Author [148])

Author's Last Name, Author's First Name. *Book Title*. City of Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication. Medium.

Abzug, Bella. *Gender Gap: Bella Abzug's Guide to Political Power for American Women*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1984. Print.

##### 3.1.2 A Book by Two or More Authors (5.5.4 [154])

First Author's Last Name, First Author's First Name and Second Author's Name. *Book Title*.

City of Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication. Medium.

Richards, J. M. and Nikolaus Pevsner. *The Anti-Rationalists*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1973.

Print.

### 3.1.3 Two or More Books by the Same Author (5.3.4 [133])

In the second of two citations by the same author, use three hyphens in place of the author's name.

Rapping, Elayne. *The Looking Glass World of Nonfiction TV*. Boston: South End, 1987. Print.

---. *Media-tions: Forays into the Culture and Gender Wars*. Boston: South End, 1994. Print.

### 3.1.4 A Publisher's Imprint (5.5.17 [173])

Author's Last Name, Author's First Name. *Book Title*. City of Publication: Imprint-Publisher, Year of Publication. Medium.

Ball, Jesse. *The Way Through Doors*. New York: Vintage-Random, 2009. Print.

### 3.1.5 A Book with Multiple Publishers (5.5.18 [173])

Author's Last Name, Author's First Name. *Book Title*. First City of Publication: First Publisher; Second City of Publication: Second Publisher, Year of Publication. Medium.

Wallis, Roy. *The Elementary Forms of New Religious Life*. London: Routledge; Boston: Kegan, 1984. Print.

### 3.1.5 An Anthology or a Compilation (5.5.3 [153])

Editor's Name(s), ed(s). *Book Title*. Edition (if applicable). Volume (if applicable). City of Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication. Medium.

Petracca, Michael and Madeline Sorapure, eds. *Common Culture: Reading and Writing about American Popular Culture*. 4th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall-Pearson, 2004.

Print.

### 3.1.6 A Translation (5.5.11 [164])

Author's Last Name, Author's First Name. *Book Title*. Trans. Translator's Name. Ed. Editor's Name (if applicable). City of Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication. Medium.

Cixous, Hélène. *The Book of Promethea*. Trans. Betsy Wing. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1991.  
Print.

### 3.1.7 A Work in an Anthology (5.5.6 [157])

Author's Last Name, Author's First Name. "Essay Title." *Book Title*. Ed. Editor's Name(s).  
Edition (if applicable). Volume number (if applicable). City of Publication: Publisher,  
Year of Publication. First Page of Essay-Last Page of Essay. Medium.

Fitzgerald, F. Scott. "Babylon Revisited." *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*.  
*Between the Wars 1914-1945*. Ed. Nina Baym, et al. 6th ed. Vol. D. New York: Norton,  
2003. 1658-72. Print.

### 3.1.8 Articles or Essays Reprinted in an Anthology or a Compilation (5.6.7 [158])

Author's Last Name, Author's First Name. "Article/Essay Title." Original Publication  
Information. Rpt. in *Book Title*. Edition (if applicable). Ed. Editor's Name. City of  
Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication. First Page of Article-Last Page of Article.  
Medium.

Holland, Norman N. "Unity, Identity, Text, Self." *PMLA* 90 (1975): 813-22. Rpt. in  
*Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism*. Ed. Jane P.  
Tompkins. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1980. 118-33. Print.

## 3.2 Periodicals

Here is the required information for a periodical reference on the Works Cited page:

the author's name  
the title of the article  
the title of the journal  
the volume number  
the issue number  
the year of publication  
the page numbers  
the medium of publication

### 3.2.1 An Article in a Scholarly Journal (5.4.2 [137])

Author's Last Name, Author's First Name. "Article Title." *Journal Title* Volume.Issue (Year):  
First Page of Article-Last Page of Article. Medium.



Hallin, Daniel C. "Sound Bite News: Television Coverage of Elections, 1968-1998." *Journal of Communication* 42.2 (1992): 5-24. Print.

### 3.2.2 An Article in a Scholarly Journal Article That Uses Only Issue Numbers (5.4.3 [140])

Author's Last Name, Author's First Name. "Article Title." *Journal Title* Issue (Year): First Page of Article-Last Page of Article. Medium.

Lajolo, Marisa. "The Female Reader on Trial." *Brasil* 14 (1995): 61-81. Print.

### 3.2.3 A Scholarly Journal Article on the Web Only (5.6.3 [190])

Author's Last Name, Author's First Name. "Article Title." *Journal Title* Volume.Issue (Year of Publication): Number of Paragraphs or First Page-Last Page. Medium. Date of Access.

Flanagan, Roy. "Reflections on Milton and Ariosto." *Early Modern Literary Studies* 2.3 (1996): 16 pars. Web. 22 Feb. 1997.

### 3.2.4 A Scholarly Journal Article in a Library Database (5.6.4 [192])

Author's Last Name, Author's First Name. Print Information (if available). *Database*. Medium. Date of Access.

Osteen, Mark. "Echo Chamber: Undertaking *The Body Artist*." *Studies in the Novel* 37.1 (2005): 64-81. *Academic Search Complete*. Web. 1 Dec. 2008.

### 3.2.5 An Article in a Magazine (5.4.6 [142])

*Note: Magazines and newspapers are not usually considered scholarly resources, therefore you should NOT use them unless your instructor and assignment prompt specifically allow them.*

Author's Last Name, Author's First Name. "Article Title." *Magazine Title* Day Month Year: First Page of Article-Last Page of Article. Medium.

Mehta, Pratap Bhanu. "Exploding Myths." *New Republic* 6 June 1998: 17-9. Print.

### 3.2.6 An Article in a Newspaper (5.4.5 [141])

Author's Last Name, Author's First Name. "Article Title." *Newspaper Title* Day Month Year: First Page of Article-Last Page of Article. Medium.

Hirsch, Marianne. "The Day Time Stopped." *Chronicle of Higher Education* 25 Jan. 2002: B11-14. Print.

### 3.3 Film and Television

Here is the required information for a film or television reference on the Works Cited page:

the title of the film or television program

the title of the episode of the television program (if citing a particular episode)

the director's name (for film)

the production company (for film) or the network (for television)

the episode airdate (for television) or the year of release (for film)

#### 3.3.1 Film (5.7.3 [197])

*Film Title*. Dir. Director's Name. Distributor, Year of Release. Medium.

*Donnie Darko*. Dir. Richard Kelly. 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2001. Film.

#### 3.3.2 Television Episode (5.7.1 [193])

"Episode Title." *Program Title*. Network. Broadcast Date. Medium.

"Strangers in the House." *My So-Called Life*. ABC. 20 Oct. 1994. Television.

#### 3.4 A Painting, Sculpture, or Photograph (5.7.6 [200])

Artist's Last Name, First Name. *Title*. Date. Institution or Individual (Museum or Collector),

City. Publication Information for the source in which the photograph of the artwork

appears.

Cornell, Joseph. *Soap Bubble Set*. 1936. Wadsworth Athenaeum, Hartford, CT. By Wayne

Andersen. "Joseph Cornell's 'Healthier Possibilities.'" *Common Knowledge* 12.3 (2006):

420-442. Figure 2. Print.

#### 3.5 Course Lecture

##### 3.5.1 In-Class Lecture (5.7.11 [203])

Instructor's Last Name, Instructor's First Name. "Lecture Title." Course Number Course Title.

College or University, City, State. Day Month Year. Lecture.

Blazer, Alex E. "Poststructuralism and Deconstruction." English 491 Interpretive Theory: The

New Criticism to the Present. University of Louisville, Louisville, KY. 30 Mar. 2005.

Lecture.

### 3.5.2 Online Lecture Notes

Instructor's Last Name, Instructor's First Name. "Lecture Title." Course Number Course Title.

College or University, City, State. Original Date of Publication (if known). Day Month

Year of Viewing <URL>.

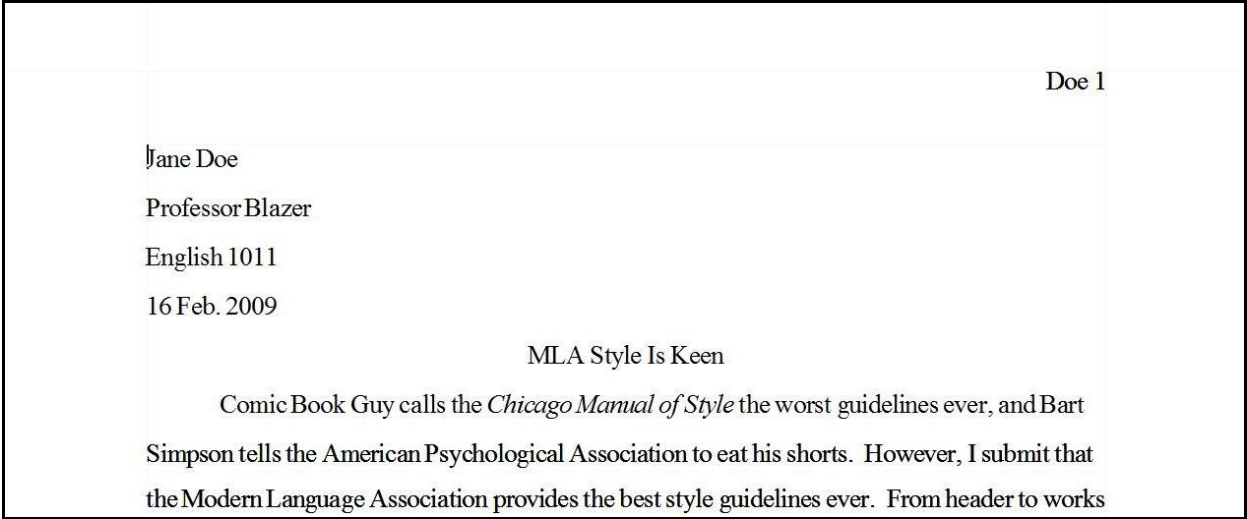
Blazer, Alex E. "Modernism." English 226: American Literature II: from 1860. Grand Valley

State University, Allendale, MI. 8 Feb. 2007. 22 Apr. 2007

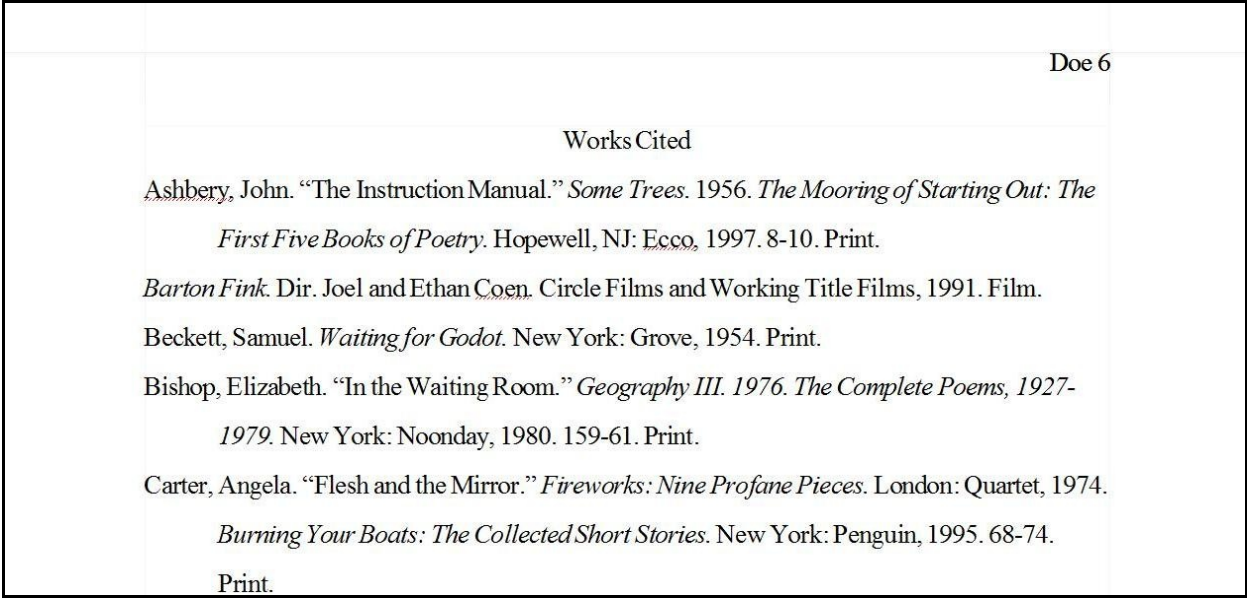
<<http://faculty.gvsu.edu/blazera/226/Lectures-07-WI.pdf>>.

4. Illustrations

Here is what the first page of an MLA styled paper should look like. Notice the placement of the running header, heading, and one-inch margins.



Here is what the Works Cited page should look like. Notice how the second line of a citation is indented one-half inch.



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8 May 2009

### MLA Style Checklist

1. **Running Header:** Does your running header include your last name and the current page number on each page, and is it located on the top righthand corner of each page, one-half inch from the top edge?
2. **Font:** Does your paper use a 12 point, Times New Roman font?
3. **Margins:** Does your paper have one inch margins?
4. **Heading:** Does your paper have a heading which includes your name, your instructor's name, the course number, and the date?
5. **Title:** Does your paper have a centered title?
6. **Spacing:** Does your paper double-space everything (except single-spaced block quotations of poetry if applicable)?
7. **Titles of Works:** Does your paper properly place titles of works in italics or quotation marks?
8. **Quote Introduction:** Does your paper introduce all quotations and not allow any quote to stand alone as a sentence?
9. **Quotation Style:** Does your paper properly quote four lines or less of prose and one or two lines of poetry? Does your paper properly block quote five lines or more of prose, three or more lines of poetry, and dialogue from drama, film, and television?
10. **Parenthetical Citation:** Are all of your paper's quotations, either in-text or block quotes, followed by a parenthetical citation that includes a page number for prose and a line or page number for poetry?
11. **Quotation Explanation:** Does your paper effectively explain or interpret its quoted material?
12. **Works Cited:** Does your paper include a Works Cited page that properly cites all applicable books, periodicals, film and television, and electronic sources?