

A Thematic Approach to French Cultural Studies

A Thematic Approach to French Cultural Studies

*Love, Sex and Desire in
French Literature and Cinema*

Marie-Anne Visoi



Universal-Publishers
Boca Raton

*A Thematic Approach to French Cultural Studies:
Love, Sex and Desire in French Literature and Cinema*

Copyright © 2012 Marie-Anne Visoi
All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without written permission from the publisher

Universal-Publishers
Boca Raton, Florida • USA
2012

ISBN-10: 1-61233-079-7/ISBN-13: 978-1-61233-079-2

www.universal-publishers.com

Cover image © Bocanm | Dreamstime.com

Reprinted with permission by
The Literary Dictionary Company Limited:
“Pierre Choderlos De Laclos” written by Simon Davies
“Emile Zola” written by Susan Harrow
“Marguerite Duras” written by R. Gunther

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Visoi, Marie-Anne.

A thematic approach to French cultural studies : love, sex and desire in French literature and cinema / Marie-Anne Visoi.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-1-61233-079-2 (pbk. : alk. paper) -- ISBN 1-61233-079-7 (pbk. : alk. paper)

1. French literature--Study and teaching (Higher)--United States. 2. French literature--Film and video adaptations. 3. Love in literature. 4. Sex in literature. 5. Desire in literature. 6. Desire in motion pictures. I. Title.

PQ53.V57 2012

840'.71173

2011046512

Table of Contents

Preface	VII
I. Instructor's Handbook	11
Teaching Methodology	11
Introductory Lecture	13
Cultural Profile	13
Theme Presentation	13
Socio-historical and Cultural Background	14
Questioning Techniques	14
Strategies for Passage Analysis	16
a. Engagement with the literary text	16
b. Literary commentary	17
c. Discussion of socio-cultural norms and patterns	19
d. Integrated activities and co-operative learning	20
Integrating Literature and Cinema	21
a. Film terminology	21
b. Comparative analysis: novel and film	23
c. Developing interpretive skills	24
Classroom Activities, Handouts and Assignments	26
a. Oral presentations	27
b. Panel discussions and debates	29
c. Literary terms in context worksheet	29
d. Novel and film adaptation worksheet	31
e. Essay outline	32
Evaluation Methods	33
a. Diagnostic evaluation: Cultural Profile	33
b. Oral presentation evaluation criteria	35
c. Essay writing criteria	36

II. Student Guide..... 39

Chapter 1..... 41

The Theme of “Love, Sex, and Desire” 41
Ovid, “The Art of Love” 42
Plato, “The Symposium” 43
The Bible, “The Song of Songs” 44
Discussion Questions 45
Reflection Questions and Suggestions for
Individual Study and Research..... 46

Chapter 2: “Dangerous Liaisons” by C. De Laclos 49

Courtly Love and the Epistolary Novel..... 49
Romance and the Epistolary Novel..... 52
“Dangerous Liaisons” Passage Analysis 59
Film Adaptation..... 62
Study Questions 63
Take Home Quiz 64
Additional Study Questions 64

Chapter 3: “Nana” by E. Zola..... 67

Mysticism and Sensuality in Zola’s “Nana” 75
“Nana”: Passage Analysis 78
Study Questions 81
Discussion Topics..... 82
Essay Topics 83
Practice Exercises 83

Chapter 4: “The Love” by M. Duras 85

The Rhetoric of Desire in “The Lover” 85
“The Lover” Passage Analysis 94
Film Adaptation..... 97
Study Questions 98

III. Multimedia Manual of Cultural Resources..... 101

Critical Approaches to Literature 101
Film Analysis Guide 101
Glossary of Literary Terms 103
Bibliography..... 104

Preface

A Thematic Approach to French Cultural Studies: Love, Sex and Desire in French Literature and Cinema introduces a selection of major literary texts and film adaptations to students at the intermediate college and university level. The goal of this book is to provide a theme-based approach for teaching French Cultural Studies. Its contents support specific objectives that focus on French culture as a shared system of values, beliefs and attitudes from the 18th to the 20th centuries, together with perspectives on different methods of critical and interpretative analysis:

- Use the cultural theme as a point of departure for the study of French novels and films;
- Develop the student's understanding of the interrelationship between French literature and cinema and the underlying theme;
- Provide an introduction to the historical and intellectual context within which the novels and films were produced;
- Support the development of the student's cultural competence through "close reading" and interpretation of representative French novels;
- Increase the student's awareness of interdisciplinary connections which enhance the understanding and appreciation of French culture: cinema, art, music, philosophy;
- Enable the student to contextualise and to think conceptually about French culture and its place in the Western culture and tradition.

The three components of the textbook are:

- Instructor's Handbook
- Student Guide
- Multimedia Manual of Cultural Resources

The Instructor's Handbook presents classroom-tested strategies for teaching French Cultural Studies. The outlined techniques will facilitate lecture preparation and presentation activities while enriching the cultural background of undergraduate students. One of the most noteworthy aspects of this book is that it includes a collection of effective hands-on activities, multimedia resources and teaching suggestions which will stimulate students to develop their cultural and literary competency. The text-based method is designed to encourage close reading of three representative novels in English translation and foster an independent approach to formulating problems and arguments related to specific cultural norms and patterns.

The four chapters of the Student Guide are organized as follows:

Chapter 1 introduces students to the theme of "love, sex and desire" in the Western culture through contextualisation and familiarization with related works of ancient classics. The Discussion and Reflection Questions, as well as the Suggestions for Individual Reading and Research in this chapter will serve to integrate the thematic approach and the basic components of cultural learning.

Chapters 2-4 will allow students to engage with a broader span of cultural, historical and literary topics. The close readings of three French novels in translation and the comparative analyses of two film adaptations will develop both their range of knowledge and their analytical/critical skills.

The Multimedia Manual of Cultural Resources provides useful classroom resources for the study of selected literary texts and films. The activities and links include authentic models of French culture such as on-line interviews and discussions on French cultural topics, profiles of famous novelists and philosophers as well as video and audio clips. These resources supplement lectures and aim to support students in acquiring specific background information and skills that will better prepare them for on-line response and classroom debates. Independent learning as a mode of learning that acknowledges individual differences and promotes student autonomy in the acquisition of skills and cultural knowledge is considered through a sequence of planned steps involving reading, writing and cultural research. Since learning about cultural topics evolves from good study and research habits, a desire to become familiar with the cultural terminology and an endeavour to learn how to report information orally and in writing in academic format, students are strongly encouraged to consult these resources on a regular basis in order to better understand and

interpret relationships among the arts, ideas, and values that have shaped French culture.

Students are expected to be active learners who can synthesize, interpret, and communicate knowledge and experience through on-line discussion, group literary debates and in writing. More specifically, they will understand and be able to apply technical analytical terms; use textual evidence/film clips to argue a case; prepare a brief commentary on a literary text; write a literary essay; understand and use academic conventions: referencing and bibliography.

I

Instructor's Handbook

The Instructor's Handbook includes the following components:

- Teaching Methodology
- Introductory lecture
- Questioning techniques
- Strategies for passage analysis
- Strategies for integrating literature and cinema
- Classroom activities, handouts and assignments
- Evaluation methods

Teaching Methodology

In response to a growing body of research which emphasizes the need to create cultural models, this book presents a framework for teaching French Cultural Studies. Its thematic, text-based approach reflects the principle that learning occurs through increased opportunities to understand the cultural insights or topics that are meaningful to the student. The theme of “love, sex and desire” will be explored through a series of activities designed to introduce students to effective strategies for connecting subject matter to cultural values. The importance of close reading is highlighted through a variety of cognitive contexts, which illustrate interdisciplinary connections between language, literature and cinema.

A Thematic Approach to French Cultural Studies: Love, Sex and Desire in French Literature and Cinema relies on metacognitive strategies which aim to familiarize students with the cultural terminology and stress the purpose of reading to derive meaning from the texts studied. Choosing a popular theme which is designed to cross several disciplines ensures that students will genuinely want to communicate their ideas and feelings about the topics presented in class and that they can draw on their own experience in order to contribute to classroom discussions. The Theme Presentation suggests how the topics of the course can be introduced in order to enhance socio-linguistic awareness and cultural understanding. For this purpose, the selection of passages included in the Introductory Lecture challenges

students to discover how language closely reflects the manners and customs of the Western tradition culture and encourages them to reflect on the theme studied through comparisons with their own culture.

Since knowledge of appropriate terminology is a key component of the ability to communicate orally and in writing, literary and film terms are presented through various learning experiences: theme studies, class assignments such as: Literary Terms in Context and Novel and Film Adaptation Worksheet and use of on-line tools. Along with the cultural terminology related to theme of “love, sex and desire”, brief biographical notes placed at the beginning of each chapter will provide a starting point for lectures. Through frequent use of multimedia resources, the students will be able to think critically and interpret the texts studied in their cultural context. Since appreciative abilities vary greatly among undergraduate students, it is essential to emphasize the aesthetic qualities of reading from the very beginning. Reading abilities such as: understanding the views expressed by the author, recognizing the difference between story and plot, understanding the importance of setting and character description will develop an appreciation of the novels discussed in the course.

The section Socio-historical and cultural background and the chapter Integrating Literature and Cinema outline strategies for integrating multimedia content and the two film adaptations. The planning and delivery of integrated activities such as oral presentations, panel discussions and debates will provide students with effective tools in developing communicative competence and in promoting an understanding of culture. Students who are fluent in French will have the opportunity to use authentic resources for viewing films, on-line debates and listening to documents in French. Additional learning resources will be available from the course website: supplementary material designed for students who major in Science or who do not have a background in French or Cultural Studies, specific guidelines for students who want to acquire related skills and knowledge. Independent learning is highly encouraged through a sequence of planned steps involving regular use of the Multimedia Manual of Cultural Resources: reading, writing, researching, preparing for classroom debates, etc.

Assessment and evaluation strategies included in the Instructor’s Handbook have been designed to provide information that helps instructors to identify students’ cultural background. For instance, a

useful strategy is to have students complete a Cultural Profile at the beginning of the course. This is a self-evaluation tool that serves to indicate the students' cultural background as well as learning gaps which might influence progress in the course. Oral Presentation Evaluation Criteria and Essay Writing Criteria can be adapted to formative or summative evaluations of students' cultural competence as related to the novels and films studied in the course.

Introductory Lecture

Cultural Profile

The key aspect in helping students set goals for mastering new knowledge, skills and attitudes is the self-reflection on the learning process. When teaching French Cultural Studies, valuable insight into students' background and abilities can be obtained through the use of diagnostic assessment tools such as a French Cultural Profile. At its best, the profile reflects interest and motivation for the course as well as future learning goals. As a tracking mechanism, this diagnostic tool can form the basis of student evaluation, showing growth towards mastery of subject matter.

The format presented in this book can be adapted to a variety of student self-evaluation purposes. Also, regardless of format, students should be encouraged to add experiences they consider meaningful when answering each question. The students' answers and comments will provide clues to student learning which can help structure class activities and course assignments to best meet individual needs.

Theme Presentation

It is tempting to assume that students have the cultural background and the reading competence skills needed for each course. The reality is that many students enrolled in French Cultural Studies might not be accustomed to a thematic, text-based approach. If we aim for students to have mastery of the cultural context and the literary conventions of the texts studied, it's wise to start by introducing a theme such as "love, sex and desire" through some examples from ancient classics. As students learn about themes and their cultural implications from classics, they can discover examples of social norms, attitudes and behaviours that can be reflected upon and reinterpreted. There are several advantages of starting with readings from the classics:

A Thematic Approach to French Cultural Studies

- it allows students to grasp features of the theme in context;
- both close reading and cultural awareness are reinforced;
- it focuses students' attention on the relationship between the socio-cultural and historical setting of the passages read and the universal meaning and implications of the theme from the perspective of a contemporary audience;
- the classical selections belonging to the Western Tradition Culture will encourage students to develop interpretive skills and will help them distinguish the underlying configuration of meanings from which French culture originates.

Socio-historical and cultural background

A multi-media power-point presentation is an effective way to start a discussion of the socio-historical and cultural background of a novel. In order to bridge contextual information and textual knowledge, this technique helps familiarize students with elements which form the background of the novel and, at the same time, provides an introduction to the author or the work itself. Since most students need plenty of review in order to master information, it is important to present facts and details into a larger context. For instance, a simple quote or a good selection of images that provide the visual background for the 19th century French society in Chapter 3 can initiate a discussion. An illustrative example in this context is the image of Manet's "Olympia" which connects the world of the novel to 19th century values and tastes through art representation. The painting could be used as a "motif" when discussing Nana's "homoeroticism".

Power-point presentations and multimedia links can also develop students' autonomy. When embedding a link to assigned work, students can easily review the class material, access cultural websites, watch video clips and prepare for classroom discussions on their own. Such a system would invite students to take more responsibility for their progress and could serve well for the preparation of oral presentations and essays since these resources can be also accessed independently by students outside of the classroom for follow-up study.

Questioning Techniques

Effective questioning is essential for teaching French Cultural Studies. In formulating questions, the students' diverse backgrounds and

their cultural competence need to be taken into consideration, as outlined in the Cultural Profile. Carefully formulated questions that are understandable yet challenging will develop critical thinking and stimulate self-expression. As students progress in their understanding of cultural concepts, more complex structures and challenging, provoking ideas can be incorporated. The following examples drawn from Chapters 2-4 can be considered:

Chapter 2

In your opinion, what is the level of engagement in responding to: the text of De Laclos's novel? Stephen Frears' film?

What type of emotions did you experience? Do you believe that the movie appeals to different senses than does the print text? How did the settings, costumes, and language influence your understanding of the novel after viewing the film?

Chapter 3

Does Zola question the traditional notions of male and female roles and responsibilities in his novel? Justify your opinion by using specific examples.

In "Mysticism and Sensuality", Georges Bataille compares "manifestations of uncontrolled obscenity and the holiest of ecstasies". Do you agree? Are there "links" between "divine and carnal love" in "Nana"? Is there a "unity of mystical experience and eroticism"?

Chapter 4

Comment on the following quote by Leslie Hill in "Marguerite Duras: Apocalyptic Desires" (London & New York: Routledge, 1993):

For Duras as for Barthes, the body is not a mode of self-identity: the body is a figure of madness, not self-possession. It is not an essence or nature, but a reverse of an essence or nature; it is a name for that which provokes crisis in the realm of representation by producing irreducible difference. And what it denotes most of all, in Duras as in Barthes, is desire (30).

How is sexual initiation described in “The Lover”? Are “race” and “culture” important?

On-going reflection can also be used throughout the course. The Reflection Questions section in each chapter will help students gain additional information about their own views, cultural assumptions or preconceived ideas. In order to promote reflective learning, the usefulness of reflection needs to be discussed and demonstrated through specific examples. Doing this allows students to better understand the cultural differences in the texts presented and as a result, explore additional meanings for their own interpretation.

Strategies for Passage Analysis

a. Engagement with the Literary Text

I use several strategies for motivating and involving students. To train students to focus on the text, I like to begin by reading a selection aloud and then ask students what they are thinking. I might ask a few students to restate a point of interest or pause after the reading and invite them to write down some questions. At this stage, I do not use lots of visuals or any multimedia tools; keeping students interested in the text itself and focusing on close reading will allow them to reflect on what has been read and thus promote their engagement with the literary text. Returning to topics from time to time, re-reading a short passage to illustrate ideas expressed by students allows mastery to develop gradually. Often I ask students to take turns and read important passages. I find that by giving full attention to students’ reading, I model attentive reading and listening.

One common teaching practice is to ask students to briefly answer one of my questions in writing and after 3-4 minutes to invite some to share their ideas. This kind of activity engages most students and stimulates interest in the topic discussed. When time permits, I try to record several responses on the blackboard; the list will give me an opportunity to talk about the types of novel, contextual background of the novel or other important aspects I plan to teach. Because I use as much as possible literary terminology when I write my list, I also encourage students to ask questions for clarifications. For example, when I define the term “naturalism”, I also like to point out the importance of examining Zola’s notes, drafts and manuscripts in order to understand how his descriptive techniques contributed to his “naturalistic” writing. As I comment on specific examples drawn from “Nana” and vivid illustrations of Zola’s technique at work, the

students become better able to recognize the significance of the author's creative process of writing in the context of his "naturalism". In addition, this strategy encourages students to read attentively.

To involve students in their reading, I use short, focused discussions that increase the learning power of lectures. To this end, I sometimes create a provocative topic list. Perhaps because the three novels deal with "love, sex and desire", I find that many students have strong opinions on the subject. It can be interesting to have some students talk about similar experiences and expectations with regards to the events in each novel. It is also important to draw attention to the title and to the "incipit". The title might help student predict the unfolding of the story or, in some cases, can provide a key element for the understanding of the novel.

b. Literary Commentary

When assigning a selection for close reading, I encourage students to try and visualize the scene described, or sense the feeling experienced by a certain character in order to better appreciate the aesthetic quality of reading. I find that when students form various sensory impressions or become engaged in a "dialogue" with the literary text, the social and cultural norms which are contained in its fictional world can be better understood. When, for instance, in "Nana", Zola depicts "Nana's domination over the audience" the details of the scene, when read slowly, project an image which enables students to grasp an unfamiliar culture:

A murmur spread through the house like a rising wind. A few people clapped and every opera-glass was focused on Venus. Gradually Nana had asserted her domination over the audience and now she held every man at her mercy. She was like an animal on heat whose ruttishness had permeated the whole theatre. Her slightest movement aroused lust; a jerk of her little finger was sexy. (p.26)

A close reading of this passage will draw attention to the sensory detail Zola uses in order to define Nana's position in the decadent Second Empire. Her control over men and women and her corrupt presence reverses traditional male-female roles and challenges contemporary readers of Zola's novel to see 19th century French society through a different perspective. In this context, the practice of pay-

ing attention to specific textual detail will develop the reading skills needed for intelligent interpretation of a literary work and will enhance an appreciation of Zola's style.

Students are most likely to develop literary competence and cultural knowledge when they have numerous opportunities to use appropriate terminology. As mentioned previously, in order to analyze the novels studied effectively, it is useful to teach specific literary terminology early in the course. For this purpose, *Literary Terms in Context* has been designed to familiarize students with specific terms while they re-read representative passages. Here are possible suggestions for analyzing a text critically:

- provide a list of the terms to be used in the passage analysis;
- select two representative passages;
- ask students to underline words or phrases that might catch their attention;
- teach terminology related to contextual information: socio-historical or political details, prevailing social norms;
- analyze the passages and pay particular attention to the terms highlighted;
- review the terms used and explain their importance in understanding and analyzing each passage.

Consider a selection of introductory terms that can be included in the *Literary Terms in Context* Assignment in addition to theme-specific vocabulary:

- Content: What is the plot? How are the events organized?
- Title: What is the significance of the title?
- Character: Who are the main characters? What are their characteristics? How are they developed?
- Setting: Where does the action take place? How is it described?
- Theme: What concerns or issues does the text raise?
- Style: What sort of language is used in the novels?

In motivating students to read, instead of teaching isolated facts, I try to weave together textual details, cultural concepts and personal values in order to connect the topics discussed in class to real-life issues. I find that this strategy motivates students to attentive reading; the better a student's proficiency in reading, the more success he or she

will have in understanding metaphorical language, descriptive words, especially words associated with sensory impressions. Here's a sampling of questions that may connect the reading experience to students' concerns and interests:

- How does the sequence of events influence your participation in the story?
- What is the point of view of the narration? Can you identify the narrative voice?
- Who are the principal characters? Are they portrayed according to specific societal norms? Are they uni-dimensional or multi-faceted?
- What is the setting of the narrative? How is narrative time presented?
- Are there introspective techniques used to reveal cultural norms?
- What cultural references are present in the passage? How is description used to present them?
- What is the overall tone?
- What is the word choice in the descriptive scenes (sensory, emotive, visual, etc.)
- How does the dialogue contribute to the creation of meaning?
- Are there unique elements of style which set apart this passage from another passage discussed? Which ones?
- What ideas does the passage suggest about "desire" that might be important for you to remember?

c. Discussion of Socio-cultural Norms and Patterns

One way to approach a novel selection is to point out socio-cultural norms and societal conventions and patterns. The students might need to draw upon their previous experience to interpret a specific passage and share ideas about familiar norms and conventions. For instance, when introducing "The Lover", I ask students to read aloud the passage which describes the meeting of the young French teenager with the wealthy Chinese man on the ferry. Since the crossing of the Mekong River signifies a transgression of societal norms, factors such as gender, race and sexuality complicate this fateful meeting. Some students will focus on the repetitive scene, or on the anonymity of two main characters. However, by pointing out the literary

techniques specific to the “nouveau roman” and the indeterminacies which form the individual qualities of Duras’s style, the students will have a better understanding of how the fictional setting contributes to portray societal norms and cultural values. Others may focus on character description and reflect on similarities with real life people. This sharing usually leads to a focused discussion and gives students the opportunity to understand socio-cultural norms reflected in the selected passage.

Electronic media and the scene from the film adaptation provide additional perspectives on understanding this scene. Discussions which focus on students’ reactions and their interpretation can also be very effective in promoting cultural understanding.

d. Integrated Activities and Co-operative Learning

Group work and cooperative learning ensure regular interaction on the topics discussed in class. I generally explain the grouping procedures at the beginning of the course and emphasize the importance of meaningful exchange. I encourage self-grouping but I also ensure that I assign specific tasks to pairs, or larger groups of my choice. To give students additional time for sharing ideas, I often ask students to turn to a partner and discuss a specific topic or a question. Reading and discussing a passage in a small group is also stimulating because of the different views and opinions. I assign this type of activity after students have already had a chance to read the passage at home; small group re-reading of the assigned passage will further shed light on concepts or ideas present in the text and provoke interesting text-related discussions.

Integrated activities such as shared reading and writing may involve reading one or two passages and developing a short commentary in pairs or small groups. My role with this type of activities is to provide ideas for literary commentary, insist on the use of appropriate terminology and provide regular feedback to students. Shared writing experiences are particularly useful for gaining experience in understanding the different stages of writing a literary commentary. Collaborative work can also provide opportunities for incidental teaching: as students discuss a certain aspect of the literary work, they might ask additional questions on observable cultural patterns embedded in the text or need clarification with regards to the conventions of writing.

Integrating Literature and Cinema

The integration of cinema in French Cultural Studies will help students make connections and enhance their understanding of the key themes in the novel discussed in the course. By encouraging activities and projects which relate to the world in which the students actually live, instructors will bring to life the ideas presented in class and engage students in further exploration of the cultural content of each novel. If the key theme is “desire”, for example, students may watch more attentively the scenes which help them identify patterns of interconnectedness between novel and film, identify and evaluate their own ideas about the theme or analyze patterns of behavior through an enhanced visual experience. Various quizzes, class activities and assignments will involve and challenge students to use appropriate terminology and provide opportunities to reorganize content in personally relevant ways. Here are some examples:

a. Film terminology

Quiz

Provide definitions for the following terms:

Soundtrack

Close-up

Pan

A Thematic Approach to French Cultural Studies

Montage

Shot

Voice-over

Low-angle camera

Composition

Depth of field

b. Comparative analysis: novel and film

Class Assignment

1. Compare the settings in the novel “Dangerous Liaisons” with those presented in the film adaptation.

2. Provide specific evidence and discuss how the change in settings, music and costumes conveys the historical context of the novel.

3. Explain how the social class of the main characters in the novel is highlighted through their age and gender. Compare two scenes from the novel and film.

4. Analyze the language used by Marquise de Merteuil in one of her letters. Provide a brief commentary on her style. Explain how the epistolary form of the novel is rendered in the film.

c. Developing interpretive skills

Group Discussion

1. Provide your general opinion of the film “The Lover”.
2. Identify specific film techniques which parallel Duras’s narrative strategies.
3. How does the camera movement (tilt) enhance your experience in watching the scene on the ferry? What type of emotions did you experience?
4. Does the soundtrack influence your understanding of the main characters? Explain.
5. Compare the “incipit” of the novel with the opening scene of the film. Discuss the differences and similarities.

Response Journals on Readings and Class Discussions

Keep a journal with weekly entries (approx. length per entry: 50 words). This assignment will help you become a more critical reader and thinker. Here are some ideas for your entries:

Briefly summarize the discussion on the film scene and give your response.

Did you find this novel chapter easy or difficult to read? Why? Be precise.

Do your expectations change when you use a variety of media texts: print text, computer, power-point presentation, film? In which way the different types of texts shape your cultural attitudes and beliefs? Provide specific examples.

Cultural research projects

To maximize learning, course instructors need to address students' specific interest in certain topics. Cultural projects can offer students additional opportunities to make sense of their learning experience and reach their full potential. The following outline can be easily adapted to students' levels and interests:

Outline

Brainstorm a list of topics

Select a topic

Review library and on-line sources on your topic: journal articles, scholarly books, biographical details, historical details, and other information related to your topic

Gather material, textual evidence

Title

Topic

Introduction