

PAPER #2: 5-6 pages (typed, 1" margins, no larger than double-spaced)
DUE: Thursday Feb 25th at the beginning of class

- Must be typed, double-spaced, 1" or less margins
- Must be proofread for grammatical, typographic and spelling errors with a properly formatted Works Cited page

A film journal has asked you to write an essay about Mike Leigh's films. Particularly, they want you to theorize about the things that constitute his authorship.

The audience for this journal is people who have likely seen one or two of his films and are likely conversant with debates that have developed around theories of authorship (Cahiers, Wollen, Barthes, Foucault, Altman). In other words, the journal's editorial board and readership are people who have a broad sense of film history and film theory. And so, accordingly, your analysis of Leigh's authorship should not un-problematically attribute meaning to Leigh himself. (Avoid sentences like this one: "Leigh brilliantly and masterfully crafts his films to reveal the contradictions present in any individual's life.") Leigh is, of course, a very good filmmaker but this is not a fan's appraisal of his work, rather a scholarly rumination on the films that he has directed. And, besides, it's clear that Leigh's process is EXTREMELY collaborative and so attribution to one individual is clearly a difficult thing to do. He consistently works with the same actors and the same director of photography and so their contributions are significant. In fact, his "authorship" could be described as collaborative and experimental. And so, in this piece of writing you are reflecting upon your own spectatorship of these films and describing the structures that YOU find therein. The structures, stylistics, processes of productions, politics, and themes that you find are "Leigh," and they may or may not be directly attributable to the man himself. Be sure to define any terms that you use, for example: "realism," "the ordinary," "authenticity." And please cite at least (2) of the readings.

Think of this as a user's guide. If someone wanted to make a "Mike Leigh" film, what would they need to know to do it? (But, also remember, that authorship is not only a set of formal devices, but an entire way of working and engaging with the world and its representation).