ROOSTER ILLUSION - WRITER'S GUIDE

July 2015

Your Column

Banner

Everyone has a custom banner for their columns, and should have the high resolution .png version of this banner saved somewhere on their own computers. This is the banner that goes at the top of your reviews. If you need to edit your image, click the pencil icon in the post editor. The banner should be centered and set to 'Large'.

There is no need to re-upload your image every time, simply copy and paste it from other articles or search for it in the media gallery. The formatting should be retained in either scenario.

Note: If you need a banner, or need the high resolution version of your banner, please let Sarah know.

Layout

While the layout of each post may vary, there are a few rules of thumb.

- Banner goes at the top of the post, centered and sized 'Large'.
- Movie posters are right-justified and sized 'Medium'.
    - Click at the very front of the first line of your review before 'Add Media'. This yields the best results for displaying the movie poster.
- Movie stills and other images are centered and sized 'Full' or 'Large' depending on dimensions. **Note: Wordpress will not let your images take over and will dynamically resize them if you select 'full'.**
- Contact form (if any) goes at the bottom.

Contact Form

Having a Contact Form is optional but recommended. This is currently the only way your readers can get in touch with you personally (comments being public and site-wide).

You can caption/title your contact form any way you'd like. If you'd like to use one, the code is as follows. Simply copy + paste and replace your email address.

[contact-form to='**YOUR EMAIL**' subject='Comment'][contact-field label='Name' type='name' required='1'/][contact-field label='Email' type='email'/][contact-field label='Comment' type='textarea' required='1'/][/contact-form]

TIP: When creating a new post, go to 'Edit' your last post and copy the entire article, then paste into a new post and remove the old text and picture content (crtl/cmd 'A' → crtl/cmd 'C' → crtl/cmd 'V').

Content

Post Titles

Historically, Rooster Illusion writers have used a blend of titling methods, the two most prominent being:
"Column Name watches Movie Name" or something similarly specific.
"Witty pun involving column and movie title" or something similarly vague.

They both have their advantages and disadvantages, so here are some guidelines.
➔ You must mention the actual movie name, usually in full. Exceptions are movies like, "Birdman: Or (The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance)" where you can omit the long subtitle after "Birdman".
➔ You must mention the name of your column, in full. There may be a day where we don't, but it isn't today. It helps with consistency.
➔ You should mention the release year of the movie if it adds clarification. If the release date is unclear, reference IMDB. This helps with remakes, similarly titled movies, festival releases, etc. **Note: You must mention the release date within the review, preferably the first time the movie title is mentioned.**
➔ Movie titles should be in single quotes.
➔ Please try and keep your titles brief-ish.
➔ If the post is a podcast, then title it "*subject of podcast* in the Roost".

Examples:
Scifridays: 'Crocopotamus' (2021)
Scifridays Goes For a Swim With the Toothsome 'Crocopotamus' (2021)
'Crocopotamus' (2021) Appreciates SciFridays, but Is Still Terrible

Capitalization & You

As most of you have probably been told since middle school, always capitalize the first and last word of a title. At my school, I was told to capitalize words that are five letters or less, but there's an important caveat there: that rule only applies to prepositions,

coordinating conjunctions, and articles. Here's [a list of **uncapitalized words** provided by *Grammar Girl*](#)—which, by the way, is a stellar resource—plus a bonus word:

"a," "an," "and," "at," "but," "by," "for," "in," "nor," "of," "on," "or," "so," "the," "to," "up," "with," and "yet."

The exception to this rule is if one of these words is part of a verbal phrase, such as "speak up." In that case, the word is capitalized, e.g. if a title were "Second Breakfast Speaks Up 'About Jurassic World'."

Also capitalize both terms in a hyphenated word and the first word after a colon.
1. (*Incorrect*) "The 'Star Trek Into Darkness' Problem: to Objectify Your Female Characters or Not to Objectify Your Female Characters?"
2. (*Correct*) "The 'Star Trek Into Darkness' Problem: To Objectify Your Female Characters or Not to Objectify Your Female Characters?"

There are some finer points to capitalizing words in titles. Some foreign titles only capitalize the first word, such as *Le fabuleux destin d'Amélie Poulain*. Note that proper nouns remain capitalized. Often, we just use the English title, but should you decide to use the original title, check IMDB for how you should capitalize. If the movie's title is consistently capitalized in a way that contradicts our internal style guide, then go with the style used by the movie instead.

Information & Links
Talking about Movies
You are not required to provide a link to a movie's IMDB page.

Talking about Actors and Production Staff
Providing a link to anyone's IMDB is also completely optional. If you would like to do that, go for it. They'll probably appreciate it.

Referencing anything else?
If you are referencing another article or review, add a link to that review and make sure you mention the source in the post somewhere. "As Alex Gladwin wrote on Rooster Illusion Reviews, "Lovecraft was definitely sexist and racist, but he lived in the 1920's so basically he was as progressive as Wendy Davis.'"

If you are referencing a website, same deal. Mention the site name and any other relevant information (On the A.V. Club website…) and provide a link.

Including Images In Your Posts Or: *How I Learned to Stop Infringing on Copyright and Love the Citation*

Fair Use Policy

According to fair use policy, we can display images related to our reviews on the website. Fair use is a deliberately grey area. There are however, some rules we can follow to protect ourselves:

1. All images on the site must include a citation to the original creator. This applies whether the image is a screenshot you took of the film or something copied from Google. The **only exception** is a photo that you took yourself of something you made yourself. If you photograph a tree you can include it with no citation. If you screenshot a tree in *The Amazing Spiderman 2* then you need to include a citation (and think about how you spend your free time).
   a. If the image is from a film, cite the company with rights to the film. IMDB is the easiest source for this information. You can opt to use all the studios listed, or just the top one.
2. Fair use only applies to movie/TV related images. We are a film and TV review blog. We are allowed to include images from film and TV. If you want to include a photo of a blender or Barack Obama (both equally popular) you will need to use Wikimedia Commons, Getty's "Embed this image" option, Google search with modifications or another creative commons standard.
   a. These sites host images that are free for use, just pay attention to the rights associated. A simple google image search is not ok. The creators of those images have not approved their images to be shown on another blog. Wikimedia Commons clearly spells out what license rights are associated with each image.
   b. If you use Google, you can use the search options to choose images only labeled with CC.

Making a Citation

To add a citation to your image, follow these instructions:

1. Copy the following code: STUDIO NAME
2. Open the image editor
3. Paste the code into the caption box and replace *Studio Name* with the actual name of the studio/rights holder
4. Gaze upon the beauty of legal compliance. Feel free to include any witty quips or links to Amazon that meet your fancy.

To use Wikimedia Commons, follow the same steps, but enter Wikimedia Commons in place of the studio name unless the image license information specifies otherwise.

Embedding From Getty

Getty has unlocked their vast catalog of images for free use. The caveat is that you must embed the images rather than uploading. The citation links they include are somewhat ugly, but they are a fantastic source of free images.

1. Go to gettyimages.com and select an image.
2. Click on the "embed this image" button to the bottom right of the image.
3. Copy the giant block of HTML code.
4. Paste the HTML into your post.
5. Call your closest relatives and tell them you accomplished something important today. They probably miss you.

Tagging & Categories

Categories

Right now all of our reviews are categorized under "Movie Review", "Short Film", "Game Review" or "Show Review" before anything else. Additional tags should include your column as well as any modifying factors. "Netflix Review" are for things on Netflix (even though they might not always be). "Rooster Recap" and "Octoberween" should be used when relevant, obviously.

Media Type | Column Name | Modifier

Tagging

Tagging is kind of a finicky thing. Done correctly it can significantly boost our views, as it essentially lets search engines know what is on our site. I shamelessly stole this list from **this article** (the whole thing is worth the read).

It's also a good idea to tag both Rooster Illusion and your column name. It helps with searches.

Do's of Tagging -

1. **DO** use tags liberally. A tag doesn't need to be a summary of the entire post; it could describe just one section. If it can be applied to more than one post, go ahead and create a tag for it.
2. **DO** have fun with tags. Unlike with categories, which users depend on more for navigation, you can play around a bit more with tags. Try using longer phrases, hashtags, quotes, jokes; as long as they fulfill their purpose of linking like posts together and helping readers navigate your site.
3. **DO** use descriptive tags that can stand on their own and still be clear. For example, an ecommerce website would be better off using the tag "programmable coffee makers" instead of just "programmable." Think about the

permalinks and anchor text for internal links you're creating and how search engines will understand them.

Don'ts of Tagging -
1. **DON'T** capitalize tags. It's common practice to capitalize categories, but use lowercase for tags. This isn't required, and by no means universal, but it's fairly standard and helps to maintain the distinction between the taxonomies for you and your readers.
2. **DON'T** create a tag that only applies to one post. Tags shouldn't be too specific (for instance, a duplicate of the post title). The purpose of tags is to link related posts together, not just label them.
3. **DON'T** use tags that are just duplicates of your categories. They're already linked together, so there's no purpose to this. Tags should be more specific than categories.

Featured Image

You can select any image you want for your featured image (even one that isn't in your post) but please don't use the film's poster. The dimensions are not suited for our featured image slot and it leaves weird white space. Also don't use something pornographic, disgusting, gory, or any combination of those.

Posting

Schedule/Draft/Publish

Scheduling a Post
If you're ahead of your game and you want to write articles ahead of time, you can schedule them for any date in the future. Under "Change Status", simply select "Schedule" and pick the desired date and time. **Note: WP operates on a different time zone, so I would recommend picking an afternoon time, like 1:00pm or so.**

If you're behind or want the post to appear behind someone else's review, you can also use the schedule function to backdate a post.

Draft vs. Publish
There are probably going to be times where your post isn't ready for the public. If this is the case, you can select 'Draft' instead. Please note that the only people who can see your draft are yourself and James. If you are collaborating with another writer(s), I would suggest using a Google doc until the review is ready to go.

If you accidentally publish a post you can select 'Draft' in edit mode to un-publish it.

Social Media

As writers you are able to connect your own social media accounts to your WP account. For example, I currently use the Twitter addon to push updates directly to @SciFriday. Currently the format is just to use the article title, so if you want to edit it and add hashtags or '@'s, I encourage you to do so.

We can use a multitude of social media accounts, although for our purposes we'll mostly be using Facebook and Twitter. If you want to use your personal accounts, feel free to do so.

For Facebook - remember to link the Rooster Illusion Reviews fanpage as well.
For Twitter - you may want to @RuseterIllusion or any other writers if you have the space.

Remember - all of our relevant accounts are listed in Google Drive. If you have a Twitter handle and you haven't added it yet, go do it!

Grammar & Syntax

Dashes and Hyphens

Hyphens

Hyphens (-) are used to combine two or more words into one. Note the difference between these two sentences:

1. Chris is a man eating fish.
2. Chris is a man-eating fish.

In sentence 1, Chris is a person of the male persuasion who is consuming some fish. In sentence 2, Chris is a fish who eats people.

Use hyphens whenever it clarifies the way you wish to pair words in a sentence, such as in the two sentences above, or whenever using the phrases "*n*-year-old." One more complicated case is describing centuries or eras. If the century or era is a noun, then do not hyphenate it. If the century or era is an adjective, then hyphenate it.

1. (*Noun*) Drew is actually a space pirate from the 25th century.
2. (*Adjective*) Drew is actually a 25th-century space pirate.

The most common error with hyphens (besides using them as dashes; see next section) is when combining two compound words with "and," or trying to use two prefixes with the same word. Often, sentences are incorrectly written like this:

1. (*Incorrect*) Sarah can't decide if she is anti or pro-Giallo horror.
2. (*Incorrect*) Alex talks too much about second and third-wave feminism.

Instead, they should be written like this:

1. (*Correct*) Sarah can't decide if she is anti- or pro-Giallo horror.
2. (*Correct*) Alex talks too much about second- and third-wave feminism.

Dashes

Dashes come in two forms: en-dashes (–) and em-dashes (—). Their names stem from the fact that en-dashes are the width of the letter "n," whereas em-dashes are the width of the letter "m." En-dashes can be written in Windows by holding "ALT" and entering 0150 on a number pad; in OSX, hold "option" and then press the hyphen key. Em-dashes can be written in Windows by holding "ALT" and entering 0151 on a number pad; in OSX, hold "option" and shift," and then press the hyphen key.

En-dashes and em-dashes can almost always be used interchangeably. They have the same function as "interrupter" commas—i.e. commas that demarcate information that "interrupts" your main sentence, like this tidbit does—or commas that set off an extra tidbit at the end of a sentence. Here's an example of each:

1. (*Interruptor*) James started Rooster Illusion, that site we all write for, about three years ago.
2. (*Extra Tidbit*) James still writes for Rooster Illusion, a review site.

In each of these sentences, you could replace the commas with a dash. Generally, you should use a dash instead of a comma if the interrupter is a long string of words, or if you want to add emphasis. Which dash is up to you (just be consistent), but depending on which one you pick, you need to make slight alterations. If you use an en-dash, there should be a space on both sides of the dash; if you use an em-dash, there should be no space around the dash. Taking that first sentence as an example:

1. (*En-dash*) James started Rooster Illusion – that site we all write for – about three years ago.
2. (*Em-dash*) James started Rooster Illusion—that site we all write for—about three years ago.

The only situation where you must use an en-dash instead of an em-dash is when discussing time spans. In this situation, you use an en-dash, but you do not put spaces around the dash. Similarly, you must use an em-dash instead of an en-dash when attributing a quote. Below is an example of each special case:

1. (*En-dash*) I expect it will only be 2–3 years until we are making millions from this site.
2. (*Em-dash*) "I'm … such a big fan of … horror."
   —Sarah Lawrence

Colons and Semicolons

Colons

Colons are used to set off a list or note that what is to follow will provide clarification/elaboration. However, the sentence that leads into the colon has to be a complete sentence.

1. (*Incorrect*) If there is one thing I hate, it is: having to think of a thing to list.
2. (*Correct*) There is one thing I hate: having to think of a thing to list.

Semicolons

Semicolons are predominantly used identically to a period. They connect two independent clauses, i.e. full sentences. They are largely used for effect, emphasizing the relationship between two sentences. Thus, do not overuse them, as they will lose their effect rapidly.

1. (*Incorrect*) A lot of people think semicolons are useless; but they aren't.
2. (*Correct*) A lot of people think semicolons are useless; that being said, there are some good uses for them, this sentence not included.

Semicolons can also be used to demarcate items in a list, much like commas. The reason to use them instead of commas is if the items of the list are long, or the items have commas contained in them. See below for an example where using commas would be confusing (1) and how the semicolon clarifies the situation (2).

1. (*Commas*) I hate multi-tasking for three reasons: first, I forget what I'm doing, second, I get confused, and third, I forget what I'm doing.
2. (*Semicolons*) I hate multi-tasking for three reasons: first, I forget what I'm doing; second, I get confused; and third, I forget what I'm doing.

Titles, Italics, and Quotation Marks

Titles of long-form works are italicized, whereas titles of short-form works are put in quotes. This can be subjective, but here's a list:

Italics	Quotes
Albums	Songs
Books	Chapters
Websites	Articles
Movies	Short Films
TV Shows	Episodes
Journals	

Magazines	

When in doubt, look it up online and see what other people are doing.

Sarah's Note: I like the shelf/clothespins method. If it's short and could be hung up with clothespins, use the clothespins (quotes). If it's too big/long, you have to put it on the shelf (underline).

If you name a long-form work in an italicized sentence, then unitalicize the title. If you name a short-form work in an italicized sentence, then leave the title italicized and put it in quotation marks as you normally would. If you name a long- or short-form work in a bold or otherwise modified sentence, follow the standard procedure for demarcating a title.

Punctuation with Quotation Marks
Commas and Periods
If a comma or period is meant to follow a quotation or quoted word, the comma or period always goes inside the quotation mark.
1. James says, "You are all special stars."
2. He means it negatively, because he hates the word "stars."

Colons and Semicolons
Semicolons and colons go outside of the quotation marks.
1. There are two things I think of when I hear the word "alien": Sigourney Weaver, and Sigourney Weaver.
2. Sorry, I didn't hear what you said after the word "alien"; I was thinking about Sigourney Weaver.

Question Marks and Exclamation Points
Question marks and exclamation points can go either way. If the question mark or exclamation point is a part of the sentence, then keep it inside the quotation mark. If not, then keep it outside.
1. Have you ever said to yourself, "I could really use another adaptation of *Cinderella*"?
2. Surely you've asked yourself, "Do we really need another *Cinderella*?"

Nested Quotation Marks
For nested quotes or titles that are placed in quotation marks, alternate between single (') and double (") quotes. For an example of this, I'll turn to Arthur Conan Doyle's "The 'Gloria Scott,'" the title of which is its own example. In this story, Watson is quoting a story told to him by Sherlock Holmes, who is quoting a story told to him by a young man named Trevor, whose story involves a quotation from his father. So, the first "level"

is the quotation marks demarcating Holmes' speech ("); the second is the single quotes representing Trevor's speech ('); and the third is the quotation marks representing Trevor's father's speech ("):

> "'"You're not going away in any kind of spirit, Hudson, I hope," said my father, with a tameness which made my blood boil.'"

Alternate as many times as you need, but I would avoid getting as convoluted as the sentence above.
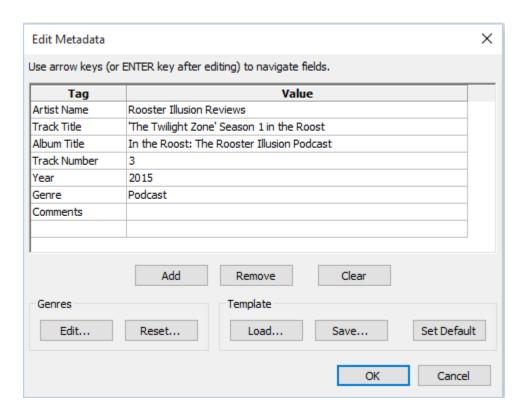
Other Media

Podcasts

If you plan to record a podcast, there are two key questions:

1. Who will be involved?
2. Will it be a general podcast, or a column-specific podcast?

For question 1, you should choose who will be involved or ask the group who is interested. Determine a schedule that gives everyone enough time to watch the relevant content, and then decide on a date to record. Make sure to discuss beforehand the general structure of the conversation. Setting an agenda is a good idea for keeping everyone on track. Also determine ahead of time who will edit all of the individual audio tracks together to make the final podcast.

When recording, everyone should join the same Skype call or Google Hangout. Each person should wear headphones to block out echoes in the recordings, and each person should record their own audio in Audacity (a free program). Ensure that your microphone is selected in Audacity, and keep a consistent, close distance to your microphone. Avoid clicking or making excess noise while recording.

At the end of recording, each person should compress their "TITLE.aup" file and "TITLE_data" folder into a zip file and then share the zip file with the editor via Google Drive or Dropbox. The editor will compile the audio into a single podcast and then upload the file to Wordpress and create the post. If you want to know some editing best practices, ask Alex. When exporting the file, export it as an MP3. For the metadata, follow this template:

Edit Metadata   ✕

Use arrow keys (or ENTER key after editing) to navigate fields.

Tag	Value
Artist Name	Rooster Illusion Reviews
Track Title	'The Twilight Zone' Season 1 in the Roost
Album Title	In the Roost: The Rooster Illusion Podcast
Track Number	3
Year	2015
Genre	Podcast
Comments	

[Add]   [Remove]   [Clear]

Genres
[Edit...]   [Reset...]

Template
[Load...]   [Save...]   [Set Default]

[OK]   [Cancel]

For question 2, determine whether the discussion or content under discussion fit a particular column. For example, a discussion of the degradation of the Alien Franchise does not fit any one specific column. In contrast, a discussion of *Swamp Thing*—the 1982 Wes Craven adaptation of the DC comic—is decidedly a Capes on Camera topic. For both of these cases, the title of the post should use the column title In the Roost, and follow the title conventions in the Style Guide; the banner should be for In the Roost; and the selected categories should include In the Roost. The only major difference is that the *Swamp Thing* podcast would also be categorized as Capes on Camera, and within the podcast itself, Will (or a designated person) would state that it is an In the Roost and Capes on Camera podcast.

Best Practices
Last but not least, here is a list of Rooster Illusion's **Best Practices**. All of these are of course voluntary, but recommended.

Proofreading
Everyone writes their reviews at different times, whether it's months ahead or hours ahead of publishing, but proofreading is always a good idea.
  ➔ You can always ask in RI chat if someone will proofread/edit your article.

- ➔ You can literally sleep on it - give your article 24 hours and then re-read for errors, etc. This is probably the most effective way to catch mistakes in your posts.
- ➔ You can read it out loud. This is the best 'my article was supposed to be up two hours ago' method, and you'll catch most mistakes.

Obviously everyone makes mistakes, and even when two people read something there are bound to be occasional errors. If you see a mistake in a post, message that person (on FB probably) and let them know.

The Dibs Chart/Double Reviews

We are all guilty of not using The Dibs Chart, but it is a handy reference that declutters the FB chat. If you need to ask about a movie, please do, but don't assume no one is going to review the same movie as you.

Our current policy at RI is that you may review a movie a second time if you have a differing opinion than another writer. If Alex calls *Interstellar* a beautiful polished turd but Chris thinks it was a modern fairytale with looming implications, they can both share those opinions. Another good solution is of course the co-review. A good way to do that is to set up a Google doc, set up a Rabb.it stream, open a beer and watch away while taking notes together, then crafting a review from the opinions.

Cross-Linking

Definitely cross the streams. If you reference another movie in a post, check and see if someone else has reviewed it. If they did, link it! This kind of link network can lead to a lot of views if we can get someone sucked in. To add additional intrigue, mention something about the review itself like, "Will actually really hated how Batman was handled as a character in *The Dark Knight*."