

Name: _____

Intro to College Lit

Section: _____

Date: _____

Literary Analysis Essays

Overview. During the course of this unit, you will be expected to write one literary analysis essay focusing on one (or more, depending on the option you choose) of the short stories we've read in class. Your essay should present a clear analytical interpretation of one aspect of the text at hand from the perspective of one of the critical lenses we've discussed in class.

Purpose. The purpose of this assignment is to help you

- demonstrate your ability to adopt a particular critical lens when analyzing a literary text
- think deeply and critically about one of the stories we've read
- articulate a focused and well-developed analysis of a literary work, and
- increase your understanding of the course texts and lenses.

Options.

- You may apply either New Criticism or New Historicism to any ONE of the short stories we've read in class, OR
- You may choose two stories from class to compare/contrast in terms of theme and one of the following: style, character, mood, or tone. Here, you'll be applying New Criticism (so no need to consider historical/social context of the stories).

Requirements.

- Your essay must be between 1200 and 1400 words in length.
- Your essay must adhere to standard MLA formatting, including a correct header and heading, original title, 11- or 12-point professional font, double spacing, properly formatted titles (all short story titles should be in quotation marks, not italics or underline), and proper in-text citations (author's last name and page number whenever paraphrasing or quoting directly).
- If you consult any outside research in your essay, your essay must include a correctly formatted Works Cited page.
- You must submit your final draft to turnitin.com AND share it with me on Google Drive in order to meet the deadline on the assignment.

Audience and Context. The audience for your literary analysis essays is comprised of the members of this class, but consider the larger context: you're aiming for a highly academic, polished piece of analysis that conforms to the expectations of the literary studies discourse community. We will talk about these expectations in class.

Grading and Assessment. I will grade your essays using the attached scoring guide. Your literary analysis essay is worth 15% of your final grade for the semester.

DEADLINES.

Mandatory Rough Draft for workshopping: R/F Feb. 27-28

Final Draft: M/T Mar. 3-4

LITERARY ANALYSIS ESSAY SCORING GUIDE

90-100:

Presents a clear, specific, relevant, debatable thesis statement. This thesis statement clearly references the text, the author, the critical lens the writer has chosen to use, and the point the writer wants to make about the text. Essay has a clearly defined focus on analyzing a particular, significant aspect of the text, and adeptly uses the critical lens chosen as the chief interpretive tool. The essay supports the thesis statement completely, using specific evidence from the literary text and, when necessary, relevant secondary sources. Clearly explains the relevance of the reasons and evidence to the point being made. Demonstrates stylistic maturity by an effective command of sentence structure, diction (word choice), and organization, including smooth transitions. The essay includes a properly formatted Works Cited page and seamlessly integrated direct quotations and other material from the text(s) at hand. Need not be without flaws, but must reveal an ability to choose from and control a wide range of the elements of effective writing.

80-89:

Also presents a clear, specific, relevant, debatable thesis statement, though it may be somewhat less fully supported than that of essays in the top range. Essay has a clear focus on a particular aspect of the text, using the critical lens chosen as the chief interpretive tool. The reasons and/or evidence provided may be less thorough and less specific, though the writer still provides understandable explanations of their significance. The essay includes a properly formatted Works Cited page and effectively integrates direct quotations and other material from the text(s) at hand. The essay is well-written in an appropriate style, but with less maturity than the top papers. The essay includes clear organization, but may lack smooth transitions between ideas. Some lapses in diction or sentence structure may appear, but the essay demonstrates sufficient control over the elements of composition to present the writer's ideas clearly.

70-79:

Presents a clear, relevant, debatable thesis statement, but this statement may be simplistic or imprecise. Attempts to use a particular critical lens, but the application of this lens may be vague or inconsistent. May attempt to support the thesis, but the support included may be overly general or vague. Organization is attempted, but may not be fully realized or particularly effective. A Works Cited page is included and direct quotations/paraphrases from the text are integrated into the essay, but there may be problems with formatting these. The essay is adequately written, but may demonstrate inconsistent control over the elements of composition.

60-69:

Attempts to present a clear thesis, but the thesis statement is unclear, irrelevant, or not debatable. The use of a particular critical lens is not immediately evident, or the application of that lens displays a fundamental lack of understanding. Begins to support the thesis, but does so with insufficient or inaccurate evidence. The essay contains obvious misreadings of the text at hand, and/or lacks a discernable organizational pattern. May lack a Works Cited page or make little attempt to cite or integrate source materials. Writing may convey the writer's ideas, but reveals significant problems with spelling, grammar, or sentence structure.

Failing Grade:

Fails to provide a discernable thesis statement. May misunderstand the text at hand entirely. Fails to reference the text with any specificity. Does not incorporate a critical lens. The essay is unacceptably brief or poorly written on several counts. Contains only slight, if any, evidence in its support.