

EN142: Intro to Poetry Assignment 1: Analytical Essay

Purpose

Successful intellectual writing engages with exhibits—texts, images, films, etc.—in a sustained and critical way. Analysis is the process of closely examining such sources and making engaging observations about them, and we communicate those ideas and interpretations through crafting an argument based on that careful reading, forming a strong thesis supported by evidence.

Assignment

Write an essay of approximately **1200–1500 words** in which you **compare and contrast two poems** we have read, analyzing their formal and structural elements, thematic and symbolic resonances, tone, language, etc. to draw out similarities and differences. **Your task is not to retell the poems in prose but to make interesting *argumentative* claims about them.**

You might consider some of the following ideas to begin narrowing your thinking:

- How do two poems by one author compare and contrast? What might we deduce about the authors' stylistic, thematic, or linguistic tendencies?
- Take up two poems by different authors that address the same idea, have the same form, or offer another obvious similarity and dive into deeper, nuanced comparison and contrast.
- Evaluate two drastically different poems and find surprising connections!

Due Dates

F 2/11 – Printed draft due in class, 500+ words

SUN 2/20 – Final draft due on Blackboard by 11:59 PM

Comments

To complete this assignment successfully, your essay will need to demonstrate your abilities as an argumentative writer. As I grade the final versions of your essay, I will look for the following elements, in priority order:

- ✓ A standard introduction in which you introduce the poems you are analyzing and offer your unique, specific thesis claim.
- ✓ An argument about the poems using your own claims supported by evidence and explication.
- ✓ A clear, logical structure, with one main idea per paragraph
- ✓ A conclusion paragraph that restates your argument
- ✓ Polished grammar and style
- ✓ MLA citation and list of works cited
- ✓ An interesting and informative title

Keep in mind that these texts are complex, and you will not be able to account for the entirety of your selected poems.

Use specific passages to support your argument. Don't just summarize the poems; analyze them.

No further research outside the assigned course texts is required.

Formatting Guidelines

- Please ensure that your name, our class (EN142), and the assignment number are listed at the top of the document. Also, include your last name and page number on every page following the first.
- Use Times New Roman 12 pt. font and double-space the main body of your essay
- Use 1" margins (sometimes Microsoft Word formats these to 1.5")
- Finally, please include an MLA-formatted works cited list at the end of your paper.

EN142 A1: Intro to Poetry Assignment 2: Major Academic Essay

Purpose

This essay will be your major step into the world of argumentative academic writing for this class. In careful close reading of the exhibit text, you will develop an interesting, debatable claim. You will bring your own analysis and ideas into conversation with literary criticism, acknowledging and responding to alternative viewpoints and summarizing and citing responsibly.

Assignment

Write an academic essay of **1400–1800 words** analyzing **one to two poem(s) of your choice** in light of **one piece of literary criticism** we have read in this class. A successful essay will present a compelling argument about the poet's work, evaluating how it engages with your chosen theoretical frameworks and ideologies. In developing your essay, you might ask: How does my analysis of this poem overturn or illustrate the critical theory? What evidence expands or complicates the critical standpoint?

Due Dates

F 4/1 – First draft of Essay 2 due in class for peer review (500+ words)

F 4/8 – ***Final essay due by 11:59 PM on Blackboard***

M 4/11 – Post-Essay 2 reflection due on Blackboard by 11:59 PM

Comments

To successfully complete this assignment, you will need to demonstrate your ability to engage with literary criticism as well as perform poetic analysis. You might begin by summarizing the theoretical piece and imagining how that critic would interpret your chosen poem. Rather than thoroughly cataloging each aspect of the poem, you might think about the broader connections or topics at hand.

Selecting a poem about the artistic or critical process might be a good foundation to start, but be creative! You must choose a poem you have not written about previously in either Assignment 1 or the Poet Research Project.

Remember, your task is not to summarize the poem, but to develop an argument that **is significant** (Why does my interpretation matter?) and **is discursive** (How does it engage with literary theory?)

As I grade the final versions of your essay, I will look for the following elements, in priority order:

- An interesting, debatable argument about the poems using your own claims supported by evidence and explication
- An argument that makes claims for significance, explaining why these interpretations are meaningful

- A clear introduction in which you introduce the exhibit you are analyzing and offer your thesis claim, alongside an essay roadmap of evidence
- Accurate representation and thoughtful engagement of the claims represented in your critical source
- A clear, logical structure, with one main idea per paragraph
- A conclusion paragraph that restates your argument
- Polished grammar and style
- MLA citation and list of works cited
- A title

No further research outside the assigned course texts is required.

Formatting Guidelines

- Please ensure that your name, our class (EN142), and the assignment number are listed at the top of the document. Also include your last name and page number on every page.
- Use Times New Roman 12 pt. font and double-space the main body of your essay
- Use 1" margins (sometimes Microsoft Word formats these to 1.5")
- Finally, please include an MLA-formatted works cited list at the end of your paper.

EN142: Intro to Poetry Poet Research Presentation

Purpose

As we investigate the cultural and historical circumstances alongside our poems, taking authors' biographical information into account can be illuminating. This small research project and presentation offers us opportunities to engage in alternative forms of writing and discussion, and it presents us with chances to learn from each other together.

Assignment

This project includes 2 parts: a written short research paper and an in-class presentation of that research work.

- The **research article** will offer important biographical and aesthetic information about your chosen poet. This essay must be between **1000–1500 words** and include at least **5 peer-reviewed sources**. The article should offer a short account of the author's life and present their approach to writing and reading poetry, and it should also **make an argument about their work and/or life**: propose your own interpretive question about this author and/or their poetry and then write an analysis that tries to answer that question.
- The **in-class presentation** should present the material of the paper in an engaging oratorical format. The presentation should be **5–7 minutes** long followed by a short question and answer session. You are also required to make a **visual accompaniment** to share with your peers: a PowerPoint or Slides presentation, a handout, or another creative visual takeaway.

Due Dates

At the beginning of the semester, you will sign up for a poet of your choice on their corresponding date. Your **presentation will be given during class time on that date**, and the **research paper is due at 11:59 PM that same day**.

Comments

As you begin writing the research paper, consider the following questions to help form an argument: What about this author is most interesting to you? Why? What does your reader learn by reading your paper? Try to develop a claim that someone might be able to disagree with. Early in your research process strive to identify within your topic area a problem, question, or controversy that requires from you a constable thesis statement supported by critical thinking.

Don't try to discuss *absolutely everything*. Paraphrase and summarize strategically. Ask yourself: Why is this piece of information relevant or important—for my argument/thesis and for my reader to know about?

Peer-reviewed sources are scholarly, reputable sources that are reviewed by experts in the field. These should be academic articles, books, established websites, encyclopedia entries, etc. If you have questions about a source, contact me!

Formatting Guidelines

- Please ensure that your name, the instructor's name, our class (EN142), and the assignment name are listed at the top left of the document in an MLA heading.
- Use Times New Roman 12 pt. font and double-space the main body of your essay

- Use 1" margins (sometimes Microsoft Word formats these to 1.5")
- Use proper MLA citation format

As I grade the essay, I will look for the following elements, in priority order:

- ✓ A standard introduction in which you introduce the poet in broad summary and present a clear thesis, explaining the problem/question to be addressed
- ✓ A strong argument that answers that question supported by clear evidence
- ✓ Responsible citation, summary, and engagement with sources
- ✓ A clear, logical structure, with one main idea per paragraph explained in strong topic sentences
- ✓ Polished grammar and style
- ✓ Proper citation and formatting, including a title

As I grade the presentation, I will look for the following elements, in priority order:

- ✓ Information is clearly organized and explained to the audience
- ✓ Information is oratorically conveyed professionally and clearly, with a sense of practiced delivery
- ✓ Visual components are thoughtfully and creatively designed
- ✓ The presentation is within time limits
- ✓ Answers to questions are engaged and attentive