

THEORETICAL ANALYSIS ESSAY GUIDELINES

In this Analysis Essay, you will be projecting your critical reading skills and your knowledge of Critical Theories learned in this course by analyzing 3 works in terms of 2 theories/themes.

HOW TO START:

1. **Choose any 3 works** from the list below:

These texts/movie OF YOUR CHOICE, will be your **PRIMARY SOURCES** in the analysis Essay.

Here are the **PRIMARY SOURCES** to choose 2 from:

- "The Lottery"
- "Two Kinds"
- "The Story of an Hour"
- "The Chaser"
- "Button, Button"
- "Spelling" poem
- *Trance* movie
- *V for Vendetta*

So, you will be writing an analysis paper comparing the 3 works in terms of 2 themes/ theories.

2. **Choose any 2 Theories/ Themes (terms)** that could be applied/ used to analyze the 2 stories you chose.

Here are the **Critical Theories and Themes/ terms** to choose from:

Semiotics: Denotative/Connotative/ Symbolic meaning (De Saussure's and Pierce's theories)

When analyzing from the Semiotic perspective, consider the meaning of the titles, some words/ phrases from the text and/or the names of the characters in the stories, and their denotative / connotative meaning in the context of the text.

- **Irony:**

Consider ironic meaning if any meaning (of the title, characters' names, or words/phrases/ideas from the stories you chose) are used ironically/ not with the meaning we would usually expect.

Ideologies/ Power, Privilege, Control gained through: certain beliefs/ traditions, through social status, age, gender, and/or education/ knowledge or certain skills (Karl Marx's theory)

- **Capitalism:** Competition, American Dream, Hero Motif, Commodification; Colonial Subject

When analyzing from Marxism/Ideologies perspective, you may consider if the characters in your chosen stories hold any power and have certain privilege among others based on their social status, gender, educational level, knowledge or any skill that the characters possesses. You may also consider if the characters can be related to any type of capitalist ideologies or are colonial subject vs. colonizer.

- **ISA/RSA: control via ideologies and repression** (Althusser's theory)

When analyzing from this perspective, you may consider if the character(s) from your chosen texts are acting as the "state apparatus" meaning if they are the ones imposing ideologies, rules, beliefs or are using any type of punishment methods upon others/ "the disobedient." Or are your characters the obedient / are they the one following the pre-set ideologies, rules, or are being punished for deviating from those expectations?

Gender expectations in Patriarchal society and/or from Feminist perspectives (Judith Butler's theory)

- **"The Cult of the True Womanhood"**

When analyzing from the Gender Theory perspective, you may consider if there are gender expectations imposed by the society in your chosen stories. If your character(s) abide with any expected gender roles. You may consider their lifestyle, profession, appearance, behavior, actions, interactions with others that re-affirm their gender role/prototype expected by the society.

Altruism and/or Narcissism:

When analyzing from the perspective of this term, you may consider if the character(s) of your chosen texts are selfless or self-centered; how much do they care about other.

- * You can use Altruism/ Narcissism as a separate choice of theory/terms or you can consider these terms with Gender Theory or with Marxism Ideologies of Power and Privilege

Psychoanalysis: (Freud's and Lacan's theories)

When analyzing from the Psychoanalysis Theory perspective, consider **Freudian** Superego- the moralization/ social expectations and norms, the Ego-the expression of the "Ideal Self" and the ID- the inner desires, fears, unwanted memories, the impact of basic needs. You may also consider **Lacan's** self-identification: how the main characters (of the 3 works you are analyzing), re-find their "new self ("Mirror-stage"), how they express their new identity ("Symbolic Order"), and how they relate / compare themselves to others or how they differ from others.

You may consider how the main character (s) **CHANGE**. Compare their **former-self** with **the new-self** and what caused or impacted the desire and / or the formation that **self-change/ the new identity**.

(For example: Diana before and after the "love-drink." Allan and his obsession to get Diana before and what will he do after Diana will become obsessed with him. Or Louise in her marriage and then after the news of her husband's death- how that news impacted on the revelation of her "new-desired-identity." Or Norma (from "Button, Button") before and after the Box and the expected money possible reward. Or The two-kinds of Amy as an obedient daughter and the more independent, rebellious one. consider Simon before meeting Elizabeth and after, and Simon after losing his memories, so Simon's identity changes / his transformations.

If needed, you may also consider was (were) the lifestyle of your characters, their actions and interactions with others reinforced by such forces as fear, desire, obsession/ addiction, jealousy, greed, and/or by a traumatic/ unwanted/ suppressed memory.

*** See the Handouts on these Theories and Terms in Canvas File

FROM THEORIES: Know the theories of **De Saussure, Peirce, Judith Butler, Althusser, Marx** (You should know the basics of their theories and be able to differentiate- see below)

Here are some brief notes on Theories:

1. Language derives its meaning from the relation of Signifier and Signified
2. The meaning of signs is created through Icon, Index, and Symbolism
3. Gender is performative and is socially constructed
4. The theory of power and knowledge is used for social control
Ideology of Power resides in the ruling ideas: the ruling class is the ruling intellectual force
5. Power is exercised through ideologies and repression (ISA and RSA)
(Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) and Repressive State Apparatus (RSA))

How to Structure your Paper?



The Analysis Paper should have Argumentative tone / Thesis Statement as it introduces your argument/ claim that the 3 works of different genres, authors, and time periods, can be analyzed through the same 2 critical theories. Your analysis paper also involves **compare-contrast mode** of writing as you compare the 3 works in terms of 2 theories.

It should also have a **title** (do not title it as Final Essay or Analysis Essay...) Be Creative, you can think of an interesting title for your Analysis Masterpiece!

Suggested Essay Structure:

Suggested Introduction: Start with a **hook** that states the importance of critical theories in the interpretation of literary works. Then, **introduce your 3 works** with a brief summary of their plot (*1-3 sent. for each story*). End the introductory paragraph with a clear **Thesis Statement** that claims how these different works can be analyzed through the same critical theories (the 2 theories that you picked).

Body Paragraphs: your body paragraphs should analyze each story using each of the theories and also **compare and contrast** them in terms of the similarities and/or differences they have for the considered theories/terms.

Make sure you **include references and/or quotes** from **Primary sources** (quotes and references from the 3 works/ stories you chose) and from **Secondary sources** (the 2 or 4 (max) sources you will research and use as a support to your claims.)

You decide the number of body paragraphs- remember the overall essay should be 3.5-4.5 pages.

Conclusion Paragraph: Sum up your analysis by looping back to introduction and restating your thesis. You may also summarize the comparison of the stories (and their main characters) in terms of your selected theories.

📖 Sample Analysis Essays may be provided- even though the requirement/prompt of the essays are slightly different, these samples can help you understand the overall Theoretical Analysis Essay structure.

📖 Use the Writing Center services to get feedback on your draft and formatting

The Critical/ Theoretical Analysis Essay:

- Should have an academic essay **structure**: Introduction, Body Paragraphs, and a Conclusion
- Should be **3.5- 4 pages** typed/ double spaced/ Times New Roman 12 font
- Should be analyzing **3 works in terms of 2 themes/ theories**
- Should refer to at least **one of the critical theories** we discussed in this course and should **mention at least one theorist** (see below for reference)
- Should **refer to** the **Primary Sources (the 3 works) you choose**. It should have supporting

information, quotes, examples/references from the sources considered for the analysis.

- **Should also have at least 2 (max 4) Secondary Sources researched** to support your claims

The secondary sources **may include**:

- ❖ **Credible** texts / electronic sources such as an article, book, journal, scholar essay, encyclopedia, etc. (* **At least 2 credible sources**)
* Use Google Scholar, or Academic databases of LAVC Library.
- ❖ Our course materials (example Theory Handouts, PowerPoints, lecture notes)
(but no more than 1 website information searched via regular search engines)

- It should **use MLA format** for in-text citations and a **Works Cited page**

*For Citation / Works Cited page of the Primary Sources consider **my MLA Citation Details and Writing Center's MLA Handout** provided separately in Files (under Final Essay folder).

Recall that:

- ❖ Your Final Analysis Essay should be uploaded on Canvas BEFORE on **June 9, 2024** before midnight.
- ❖ It should be **3.5 - 4 pages** typed/ double spaced and formatted by MLA 8th guidelines.
- ❖ It should have a **Works Cited page** in the very end (not counted as the required 3.5 - 4 pages)
- ❖ The Works Cited page should have the cited sources of your **3 Primary Sources** that you analyze in your essay (the assigned movie and the 2 works you chose from the provided list) and the **2-4 Secondary Sources** you have researched and referenced /quoted in your paper
- ❖ Your Final Analysis Essay should have **a title**- You should come up with an interesting title.

Grading Rubric

Analysis Essay is 45 points

- Academic structure/**Paragraph Organization, balance, Sentence Structure**- **5p**
 - **Length** (3.5 -4.5 pages)- **1p**
23 X 2 ratio (3 Texts/Primary Sources x 2 Theories/ themes)- **2p**
 - **Thesis Statement** (1 or 2 sentences)- **5p**
 - Introducing the **primary sources (brief summary)**- **5p**
 - Mentioning at least **1 theorist and briefly about the theory**-**2p**
 - **Referring to Primary sources** (ref. or quote) **5p**
 - **A min of 2** (max. 4) **Credible- Secondary sources**- **5p**
 - **MLA Format and In-text citation** **5p**
 - **Works Cited page** (of the 3 Primary Sources and 2-4 Secondary sources of In-text Citation)-**5p**
 - **Mechanics** (grammar, spelling, punctuation)-**5p**
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SAMPLE ESSAY WILL BE PROVIDED IN FILES in the folder About Final Essay:

ABOUT ESSAY SAMPLES:

Please note that the requirements for the analysis essay and the required length/details for the sample essay and YOURs differ; **so, consider this sample only for structure and for understanding the nature of analysis paper.**

***** Any line or idea copied from these samples or from anywhere else without citing the source will be considered plagiarism and result in 0 for your paper grade.**

