6.5 Assignment for Submission

Hamlet: Final Essay Assignment

INSTRUCTIONS

Choose one of the following topics, and write a well-developed and supported Critical Essay. Before writing your paper, review and use the Essay Writing Notes in the resource section of the course.

1. Discuss the character of either Hamlet or Claudius as a tragic hero. Include the qualities that reveal the character's strengths, as well as his weaknesses.

2. Select one of Hamlet's soliloquies, and discuss the nature of Hamlet's feelings as they reveal themselves in this speech. What insights does this speech provide into Hamlet's character? Keep most of your attention on the soliloquy you have selected, but feel free to range over the entire play as well. How does THIS soliloquy you have chosen reverberate or echo throughout the play? What themes are introduced in this soliloquy that are important to the entire play? Why is this soliloquy so important and insightful?

3. Hamlet's mood changes abruptly throughout the play. Although Hamlet believes in his sanity at all times, many believe he truly does slip into insanity at certain points of the play. Is Hamlet mad? Cite evidence for either.

4. Analyze the character of Queen Gertrude, Hamlet's mother. What are her motives for marrying Claudius? Why does she claim to support Hamlet, while she remains Claudius' queen? Is she truly 'frail', or is she a deeper character than often is portrayed?

5. Discuss Hamlet's treatment of and ideas about women, paying particular attention to Ophelia. Considering the way he has behaved to her, and the way he talks about sexuality, does Hamlet truly love Ophelia? What role does Ophelia play in Hamlet's general distrust of people (women, men, and even himself)? Cite evidence from the play.

6. Show how the two kings – Hamlet's dead father and Claudius, his brother - are contrasted with each other throughout the play.

7. Is something rotten in the state of Denmark? Explore the motif of death and decay, in that it relates to an upset of the 'natural order' of things. Is anyone in particular responsible or is the rottenness simply a condition of life?

8. Select a particular scene in Hamlet (preferably a short one) and discuss its importance to the

play. How does this particular part of the action contribute significantly to reader understanding of what is going on? What might be missing if a director decided to cut this scene (e.g., Claudius at prayer, the scene between Polonius and Reynaldo, the gravedigger scene)?

9. Some people claim that it is Hamlet's inability to act that is his 'tragic flaw', causing his downfall. Others maintain that only after Hamlet resolves to act, and gives way to impulsive and rash actions, is his fate sealed. Is Hamlet a THINKER or a DOER or both? Cite evidence from the play.

10. Discuss the importance of appearance and reality in the play. You may wish to analyze the characters of Claudius and Hamlet, as well as refer to Hamlet's interest in the players.

CHOICE
I will write my essay on topic #_____.

ESSAY (write below this line)

RUBRIC (do not delete)

Thought and Understanding:

- Consider how effectively the **student's ideas** relate to the assignment and the quality of the **literary interpretations** and **understanding**.

7.0 – 7.5 Excellent	Ideas are insightful, demonstrating a comprehension of subtle distinctions in the literary text(s) and the topic. Literary interpretations are perceptive and illuminating.
5.5 – 6.0 – 6.5 Proficient	Ideas are thoughtful, demonstrating a well-considered comprehension of the literary text(s) and the topic. Literary interpretations are revealing and convincing.
4.0 –4.5 – 5.0 Satisfactory	Ideas are relevant and straightforward, demonstrating a generalized comprehension of the literary text(s) and the topic. Literary interpretations are general but plausible.
2.5 – 3.0 – 3.5 Limited	Ideas superficial and oversimplified, demonstrating a weak comprehension of the literary text(s) and the topic. Literary interpretations are incomplete and/or literal.
0 –1.0 – 1.5 – 2.0 Poor	Ideas are largely absent or irrelevant and/or do not develop the topic. Little comprehension of the literary text(s) and/or the topic is demonstrated.

Supporting Evidence:

- Consider the **selection** and **quality** of evidence and how well the supporting evidence is **integrated**, **synthesized**, and/or **developed** to support the student's ideas.

7.0 – 7.5 Excellent	Support is explicit, precise, and deliberately chosen to reinforce the student's ideas in an effective and judicious way. A strong connection to the student's ideas is maintained.
5.5 – 6.0 – 6.5 Proficient	Support is relevant, accurate, and occasionally deliberately chosen to reinforce the student's ideas in a logical and clear way. A clear connection to the student's ideas is maintained.
4.0 –4.5 – 5.0 Satisfactory	Support is adequate and general, but occasionally lacking in persuasiveness and consistency. A straightforward connection to the student's ideas is maintained.
2.5 – 3.0 – 3.5 Limited	Support is often inappropriate or is a restatement of what was read, and/or may be repetitive, contradictory, and/or lacking. The connection to the student's ideas is vague and/or unclear.
0 - 1.0 – 1.5 – 2.0 Poor	Support is irrelevant, over generalized, and the support, if any, is largely unrelated to any ideas that may be present.

Form and Structure:

- Consider how effectively the student's organizational skills result in a **coherent**, **focused**, **shaped**, and **concluded** discussion and a **unifying effec**t or a **controlling idea** that is developed and maintained.

5 Excellent	An effective arrangement of ideas and details contributes to a fluent, controlled, and shaped discussion that concludes skilfully. The unifying effect or controlling idea is successfully sustained and integrated, and coherently presented.
4 Proficient	A considered arrangement of ideas and details contributes to a competent, controlled, and shaped discussion that concludes appropriately. The unifying effect or controlling idea is successfully sustained and coherently presented.
3 Satisfactory	A straightforward arrangement of ideas and details provides direction for the discussion that concludes functionally. The unifying effect or controlling idea is presented and maintained generally; however, coherence may falter.
2 Limited	A discernible but ineffectual arrangement of ideas and details provides some direction for the discussion that does not conclude deliberately. A unifying effect or controlling idea is not maintained.
1 Poor	A haphazard arrangement of ideas and details provides little or no direction for the discussion, and a conclusion is absent or obscure. A unifying effect or controlling idea is absent.

Matters of Choice:

- Consider the **diction**, the **syntactic structures** (such as parallelism, balance, inversion), and the extent to which the stylistic choices contribute to the creation of **voice**.

5 Excellent	Diction is precise and effective. Syntactic structures are effective and sometimes polished. Stylistic choices contribute to a confident composition with a convincing voice.
4 Proficient	Diction is specific. Syntactic structures are generally effective. Stylistic choices contribute to a competent composition with a capable voice.
3 Satisfactory	Diction adequate but lacking in specificity. Syntactic structures are generally clear, but attempts at complex structures may be awkward. Stylistic choices contribute to a clear composition with a matter of fact voice.
2 Limited	Diction is imprecise and/or inappropriate. Syntax is frequently awkward and/or immature. The writing may be vague, redundant, and/or unclear. Inadequate language choices contribute to a composition with an undiscerning or uncritical voice.
1 Poor	Diction is over-generalized and/or inaccurate. Syntax is confused and uncontrolled. The writing is unclear. Lack of language choices contributes to a confusing composition with an ineffective voice.

Matters of Correctness:

- Consider the **sentence structure** (completeness, consistency, subordination, coordination, prediction) the **usage** (accurate use of words according to convention and meaning), **the**

grammar (subject-verb/pronoun – antecedent agreement, pronoun reference and consistency of tense) and the **mechanics** (punctuation, spelling, capitalization).

5 Excellent	This writing demonstrates confidence in control of correct sentence construction, usage, grammar, and mechanics. The relative absence of error is impressive considering the complexity of the response and the circumstances.
4 Proficient	This writing demonstrates competence in control of correct sentence construction, usage, grammar, and mechanics. Minor errors in complex language structures are understandable considering the circumstances.
3 Satisfactory	This writing demonstrates control of the basics of correct sentence construction, usage, grammar, and mechanics. There may be occasional lapses in control and minor errors. However, the communication remains clear.
2 Limited	This writing demonstrates faltering control of correct sentence construction, usage, grammar, and mechanics. The range of errors blurs the clarity of communication.
1 Poor	This writing demonstrates lack of control of correct sentence construction, usage, grammar, and mechanics. Jarring errors impair communication.

Teacher's Evaluation:

Thought and Understanding x 2

Supporting Evidence: x 2

Form and Structure: x 2

Matters of Choice: x 2

Matters of Correctness: x 2

Total = /**60**