

English 1302 Critical Analysis 1

Note: all students must follow the **writing process** throughout the course. **First**, send me your topic and focus in d2l email: do not send it as an attachment. The **following week** send me your prewriting (thesis and brainstorming of key ideas either typed into email or attached in a Word document). **Finally** let me see your draft in our peer-review labs, but also take your drafts to the college writing lab for further check on grammar. Remember, the tutors guide; they do not edit students' papers. Also note I have uploaded sample student prewriting and sample student papers to the CA folder in D2L.

The first critical analysis (CA) must be an original 1 ½ -2-page (minimum 5 paragraph) essay (a college English essay is at least five developed paragraphs--5-7 sentences each--see the multi-paragraph format), with 12-point font, double spaced with 1" margins and left justification (carefully review the Essay Format guidelines). See the further directions in the folder on **MLA Essay Format**.

Write your essay on one of the assigned stories or one of the following additional stories in the text: Baldwin's "Sonny's Blues," Tan's "A Pair of Tickets," Munro's "Boys and Girls," Chopin's "The Story of an Hour," Morrison's "Recitatif," or Mason's "Shiloh." I'm listing additional stories I think students might like, and also working with more diversity in the list. If you have the time to read other stories, feel free to choose still another one from our text. But please do not ask if you can use a story outside the course text; conversely, if you choose one of the additional stories, do so because you like and understand the story.

- Titles of stories go in quotation marks: see "titles" in the MLA. Be sure you have an interesting title of your own; identify the author and story in the introduction.
- The essay must have a clear thesis statement at the end of the introduction, carefully developed argument, good closure that recalls the thesis/purpose of the essay, and at least **three incorporated, cited quotations** from the story you are analyzing (use quotation marks around the passage, author's last name, space, and page numbers in parentheses; period after the documentation; see samples below and in the student papers).
- Though you must quote to support your argument, do not pad the paper with excessive quotations. Any borrowed information from the text must be carefully documented, including background from the editor, who is documented as Mays with the page number. You do not need a Works Cited page for these first two essays as there is no outside research; this is your interpretation of the story you have chosen with assistance from me at the pre-writing stage.
- Be sure to take note of my lectures on the stories and authors, which you may use as common knowledge within the course, though not using my exact phrasing except for specific literary terms.

Sample Quotations

Example of incorporated, cited quotation from short story, where the quotation finishes the frame (no punctuation): The Misfit observes that "She would of been a good woman . . . if it had been somebody there to shoot her every minute of her life" (O'Connor 390). [The ellipsis [. . .] indicates material left out of the quotation for syntax.]

Example of incorporated, cited quotation from short story, correctly using a comma: As the Misfit observes, "She would of been a good woman . . . if it had been somebody there to shoot her every minute of her life" (O'Connor 390).

Example of incorporated, documented quotation from short story, correctly using a colon to prevent comma splice or run-on (both the frame and the quotation are sentences): The Misfit observes that the Grandmother had to learn about true Christian forgiveness: "She would of been a good woman . . . if it had been somebody there to shoot her every minute of her life" (O'Connor 390).

Example of incorporated, documented quotation from short story where the author's name is not in the frame, thus is in the parenthetical documentation: O'Connor's narrator has the Misfit observe that the Grandmother had to learn about true Christian forgiveness: "She would of been a good woman . . . if it had been somebody there to shoot her every minute of her life" (390). (note: the semicolon [;] is not used to incorporate a quotation)

Topic and Focus

You could analyze **character, conflict, point of view, imagery, theme, tone**, etc. (see the tips sheet for more topic ideas); but always remember in both the pre-writing and the final draft to include the author by name and his/her theme and purpose in your analysis: in the thesis, in the discussion, and again in the conclusion; keep your author's point, the universal truth he or she is exploring, in front of you and your reader throughout the essay, at each stage of development, and you should not write a plot summary but should have a strong critical analysis. Keep the author by name and purpose clear at every major stage of your prewriting and final draft.

As a 'formula' for developing your focus, think of the construction as author's point in the thesis, throughout the body, and again in the closure. For example: Lawrence's purpose in "The Rocking-Horse Winner" is to explore the effects of family greed and neglect through the tragic isolation and death of a boy who only wanted to be loved. This is a sample thesis; I would go on to develop the key points, keeping Lawrence by name and his intent clear throughout the essay. Keep your essay focused on your topic and thesis so you do not write a plot summary; analyze in present tense. Remember that the author has already told the story; don't re-tell it, but analyze the author's purpose in his/her story. **All roads lead to theme**, so no matter what literary technique you are analyzing, you do need to finally get at what you see as the author's theme and

purpose. Work the author's theme and purpose into your thesis, throughout the essay, and again in the conclusion.

See my lecture on theme in d2l. Work the author's theme and purpose into your thesis, throughout the essay, and again in the conclusion. Highlight passages in the story, take notes on what you think the author's purpose is. For example, if you are interested in imagery, note how the author is using those visual 'clues' and ask yourself how they are pointing to his/her theme. Keep looking at the story and taking notes, in light of what the author's purpose seems to be. See my lectures on writing critical analysis papers for more tips. Remember that your thesis must be supported by the entire story: we cannot leave out something in the story that might contradict our position or opinion, or speculate how the story 'should' have been written or how characters 'should' behave, but we must think through carefully and even be willing to adjust or change our thinking if it is not supported by what the authors have actually written. The thesis must be focused on the story as written, and the story must support the thesis.

Prewriting & Rough Draft. Carefully read the syllabus, assignments, and lectures in d2l; study the Essay Format instructions and my tips/requirements for writing the CA (two lectures); also review "Academic Honesty," "Thesis," "Brainstorming," "Notes on Mechanics," "General Writing Tips," and other grammar links in the eClassroom. Study the sample student work in the eClassroom.

Choose a topic from the suggestions and send it to me with what you want to prove. Do not send me a paragraph or paper: just the topic and purpose. Next, devise a working thesis and brainstorm your ideas: send that to me following the sample prewriting in the folder. Finally write the rough draft and bring to our peer review lab for holistic review; also take it to the writing lab for grammar check.

The brainstorming doesn't have to be a formal outline, but should be roughly how you want to organize the essay and include the major points you will develop; after you have done that pre-writing, then write the rough draft (in other words, follow the writing process—do not turn in a paper that has not been carefully prepared). Be sure to also read the thesis lecture and remember that the thesis is an assertion you must prove in the essay. Though you shouldn't worry about editing while you are brainstorming, in the rough draft you bring to lab, do spell check and proof for grammar; use correct essay format.

Final Draft. Minor adjustments to the rough draft are permissible, but be sure you don't change the thesis dramatically as it may no longer be consistent with what we agreed to. On the final drafts, follow the requirements for format and length to the letter. Though I will go over the rough draft with you in lab, as always, be sure the final paper is carefully proofread, edited, and spell checked—the final presentation and resultant grade are always the student's responsibility.

Don't use 'you' in these academic papers, as it can sound preachy or vague or even accusatory, and it may assume what the reader is not willing to grant.

Upload the final draft to the d2l drop box designated for this assignment as an MSWord document: save the file with your full name first, then a clear file name; and change it for each version. Examples: Jack Sprat CA2 Rough Draft; Jack Sprat CA2 Final Draft. Before you submit it, double check your finished draft against the essay checklist; review the grading standards as well. Students are further advised to upload the paper well before the deadline to anticipate and resolve unexpected problems.

The penalty for any **plagiarism** at any time in the course is zero on the submitted paper. If there is a second plagiarism offense, the student will fail the course, and the incident will be reported to the Admissions Office. Carefully review the District Academic Honesty Policy in the Catalog, the Course Syllabus, and the Course Academic Honesty Document.