

Objective

In our class meetings on poetry, we have discussed the way that poets use detailed language to place the reader into specific experiences. For this essay, you will respond to *one* of the prompts below, and analyze the poems you choose through some of the elements we've discussed:

Rhetorical situation (speaker, tone, point of view, "who? when? why?")

Images (literal and/or metaphorical)

Sound (word choice, rhythm, alliteration, rhyme)

Form (lines, stanzas, breaks, syntax, arrangement on the page)

Your analysis will involve establishing *what* the poems are doing (i.e., how events and objects are shown, the emotional weight these things are given, what responses the poem creates in the reader), and showing *how* the poets create those effects (with examples). In all cases, you will be looking at the text.

Option #1:

Choose a poem by Dorianne Laux, *and* a portion of the Claudia Rankine book, which are "about" the same aspect of life; it could be something concrete (e.g. cats, breakfast) or something abstract (e.g. loneliness, the mother/daughter relationship). Write an essay in which you analyze and compare how the poets create two different experiences of a similar theme.

Option #2:

Choose *one* of the two poets, and write an essay in which you analyze common characteristics of her work, with regard to language, form, image, and subject matter. How do these poems achieve their effects? What habits do you see throughout, with regard to language, form, imagery, etc.? What worldview and/or larger themes are revealed through these habits? If you are analyzing Laux, use at least three of her poems as support. If you are analyzing Rankine, use more than one section of the book.

Option #3:

You may also write an essay of your own devising, as long as it involves the analysis of more than one poem. Anyone choosing this option must have the topic *approved by me* before the rough draft is due.

You will illustrate your analysis with examples from the text. You are expected to quote from the poems, and to cite correctly, using MLA. Remember that there is no right or wrong analysis, as long as you can support it with the text itself.

Format

3 full pages minimum

Typed, double-spaced, 12 pt Times New Roman, 1" margins

MLA in-text citation style