MLA Literary Analysis Essay

Complete Draft of the Essay Due on Sunday, October 31st (10 points)

Final Draft of the Essay Due on Sunday, November 7th by 11:59P.M. (200 points)

Requirement

One of the mandated requirements for all English 1302 Classes is that students write an MLA Essay Analyzing Literature.

Successful completion of the essay demonstrates the student's critical thinking and organizational skills, as well as the ability to write a strong academic essay with citations from the text and secondary sources to reinforce the ideas expressed in the content.

Assignment

The assignment is to write an MLA Literary Analysis of a text (related texts) that has been assigned in English 1302.

- Quotations from the text and at least one outside scholarly source must be cited in support of the essay content
- Format is Modern Language Association (MLA) with a Works Cited Page
- Length of the essay is 750 – 1250 words (minimum of 6 paragraphs)
- Double-Spaced, Calibri, Size 12 Font
- Submitted through Blackboard/ Turnitin

***STOP – GO TO THE OTHER CONTENT FOLDER AND SPEND ABOUT 30 MINUTES WATCHING THE WRITING ABOUT LITERATURE VIDEOS.**

START AT THE TOP OF THE LIST AND WATCH THE FIRST FIVE VIDEOS. THE VIDEOS ON MLA CITATIONS AND MLA QUOTATIONS CAN WAIT UNTIL LATER.

Preparation

A close reading and analysis of text enhances the study of literature. The Reader Response exercises assigned in this class have provided students the opportunity to evaluate text as they read, gaining a deeper understanding of the content, a greater appreciation of the author's style, and perhaps an enriched reading experience.

Consider the literature we have discussed over the past weeks:

- What story(s) or character(s) or setting, or theme, or style and tone, comes to mind?
- What resonates with you when you think of that story (s)?

Ways to Organize the Analysis:

- a comparison of two pieces of literature
- an in-depth evaluation of a single text
- a discussion of the uniqueness of an author's style
- an analysis of the literary text as a reflection of some aspect of society
- a discussion of a common theme in two or more stories
- a discussion of a common subject in two or more stories

Students may not use a movie, TV program, or any other video type content in this analysis.

Supporting the Essay: MLA Citations

In this class, students should primarily rely on their own thinking and use citations and quotations from the story(ies) in the analysis. What a professional may have had to say about a particular piece of literature is not as important as what individual students decide to discuss and comment on.

However, I do want students to have the experience of reading scholarly commentary and utilizing at least one of these secondary sources in the analysis. The best way to locate good secondary sources is to go to the WCJC Home Page – to The Library – Open the Databases – Click on the Humanities and Literature Tab to find many different References and Data Bases.

Using direct quotes from source materials is a powerful way to support the claims made in the essay. (A rule of thumb is there should be at least one quote per paragraph.)

Planning Before Writing

Before beginning to write the paper, some planning and organizing should be done. Below is a simple plan for an essay comparing or contrasting two related stories, two comparable characters, or even the style of two different authors.

Comparison/Contrast

For example, if the essay is going to be a comparison/contrast of some type between two stories, then the following pattern works well:

1st Paragraph = Introduction to both stories where the 3 – 4 points to be compared/contrasted are indicated.

2nd Paragraph First point (x) of comparison/contrast for the first story

3rd Paragraph Second point(y) of comparison/contrast for the first story

4th Paragraph Third point (z) of comparison/contrast for the first story

5th Paragraph First point (x) of comparison/contrast for the second story

6th Paragraph Second point(y) of comparison/contrast for the second story

7th Paragraph Third point (z) of comparison/contrast for the second story

8th Paragraph Conclusion to the comparison/contrast, relating back to the introduction

The above pattern works for all comparison/contrast essays. It compares/contrasts both subjects on the same points to be fair, and it is organized so that the reader can get a clear idea of one story and then of the other. The legitimacy of the comparison/contrast is obvious.

Other Types of Essay Structures

Similar patterns can be created for any other type of analysis, where the writer determines the points to discuss and then organizes them according to the order of occurrence, an existing hierarchy, or in the order of importance.

The main idea is that essays have a clear organizational structure, resulting in a focused essay that flows from one part to the next. For example:

Argument/Persuasive Essays

Introduction makes a strong thesis statement.

Each of the next four paragraphs focuses on one point to support the thesis statement.

Concluding paragraph to pull the essay together.

Cause/ Effect Essays

Introduction makes a strong thesis statement that center on a particular cause or a particular effect.

Each of the next four paragraphs focuses on either the effect of the cause developed in the introduction or each paragraph focuses on the causes of the effect developed in the introduction.

Concluding paragraph to pull the essay together,