

# Paper #1: Argumentative Essay from Primary Texts

HUM390/Gorman

Rough Draft Due Date: **Tuesday, 9/28 in class (bring one hard copy and upload to Turnitin.com)**

Peer-editing work: part of the asynchronous weekly work, submitted by **Sunday, October 3<sup>rd</sup> at 11:59 pm**

Final Draft Due Date: **Sunday, 10/10 at 11:59 pm on Turnitin.com**

Length of the Essay: **5 pages**

**Purpose of the Assignment:** This assignment asks you to create an argumentative essay using evidence from the texts we have read in class. Argument essays require careful use of evidence that is well explained, and your work on this assignment will demonstrate how well you understand the texts we have read and the debates around them.

**Tasks for the Assignment:** To complete this assignment, you should:

1. Craft an effective argument that incorporate rational reasons for support and includes an argumentative thesis statement. Also consider and refute counterarguments.
2. Demonstrate critical reading and critical evaluation of topic.
3. Select appropriate evidence from the primary texts. Pick concise quotations that back up your thesis statement. Discuss those quotations so that you explain exactly how they relate to your thesis. Provide citations for each text using MLA format correctly both in parenthetical in-text citations and on your Works Cited page.
4. Organize the paper well and write well-crafted unified paragraphs that both relate to your topic and develop your thesis statement.
5. Use clear, error-free language to express your ideas.

**Skills from Previous Courses:** This assignment builds upon skills you developed in your Expository Writing courses (LIB111 and LIB112). If you are having difficulty remembering those skills, I have uploaded writing handouts on the Blackboard course website concerning thesis statements, paragraphing, paper organization, grammar and use and incorporation of sources. I have also created a link on our Blackboard site under the "Assignments" tab to a 10-minute VoiceThread presentation that I created for students during a previous year that talks about what I see as significant in an argumentative paper; this presentation can be helpful to you.

**Peer Review and Late Drafts:** The rough draft that you submit on **Tuesday, September 28** must be complete. It must fulfill the page length requirement, and it must be on time. If you hand in your rough draft late, the grade for the overall assignment will be lowered just as it would be if the final draft were late.

For this assignment, you will go through a peer-editing process. You must read and comment on another student's work, and you will also receive comments on your own work by one of your classmates. If you do not complete the peer-editing process, your project grade will drop a full letter grade.

**Final Drafts:** On **Sunday, October 10 by 11:59 pm**, you should submit: (1) the final draft of the essay in a hard copy and on Turnitin.com, (2) all commented-on rough drafts and peer review sheets and (3) an additional sheet in which you write a brief paragraph explaining what revisions you made due to the peer-editing process; this statement can be a bullet point list if you prefer. If the final draft is late, then the late essay policy explained in the syllabus applies.

**Evaluation of the Assignment:** Success in this assignment will be evaluated according to the following criteria: 1: demonstrated critical reading of the texts, 2: effective argumentation (thesis statement and paragraphs that match up with that thesis), 3: well-reasoned, rational evidence chosen from the text(s) that supports your thesis statement, 4: quality of the prose.

## Paper Topics:

For all of these paper topics, remember to:

- a. Use specific passages from the text to support your claims
  - b. Defend an argumentative thesis statement
  - c. Create a thesis statement that is narrow enough to be well developed in 5 pages
  - d. Develop affirmative evidence and at least one counterargument
1. Character & Theme: When you compare the characterization of Gilgamesh in the epic and in Komunyakaa's play, **which version of the character seems to deliver the message of the narrative most completely?** That is, you will have to define what you think is the overall message of the Gilgamesh story that emerges from the epic and the play. Then, your essay should explain how Gilgamesh's characterization in the epic conveys that meaning and then how Gilgamesh's characterization in the play conveys that meaning, choosing one version as the most successful. Provide an argument and counterargument(s) about this topic by drawing upon your textual analysis.
    - a. Alternative: You can use Question 1 but focus on Enkidu's character instead of Gilgamesh's.
  2. Chorus or Narrator? Some of the information that is conveyed via the narrator in the epic *Gilgamesh* is provided through the use of a chorus in the play *Gilgamesh*. Provide examples of where similar information is presented by the narrator and chorus, and then evaluate the use of these narrative devices. **Which is more successful in conveying the overall message of the Gilgamesh narrative: the use of a narrator or the use of a chorus?** Provide an argument and counterargument(s) about this topic by drawing upon specific analysis of the texts.
  3. The endings of the works: The epic ends by echoing language from its beginning; the play does not include that same type of ending but rather ends on a different note. **Based on your understanding of the major themes and meaning from the overall narrative, which ending is more successful at achieving the purpose of the Gilgamesh narrative?** Please note that you will have to explain what you think that purpose is; after doing that work, you can consider the success of one work's ending and the lack of success of the other. Provide an argument and counterargument(s) about this topic by drawing upon specific analysis of the texts.
  4. Changes in the Retellings: **Which is the most successful change that Komunyakaa made in his retelling of the Gilgamesh epic?** There were many shifts that these authors made in terms of either adding elements or removing elements. Present at least two changes that the author made and consider their implications on the text overall. After doing that work, make an argument about this question of the most successful change that the authors made, considering the counterargument(s).
  5. Women in the two versions: Women characters are more developed in the play version of the Gilgamesh narrative; however, simply having female characters does not mean that they are presented in a positive light. Based on your reading of the two works, **are female characters in the play presented any better than they are in the epic?** Use affirmative evidence, counterarguments, and refutations to pursue an argument about that topic.
    - a. My advice: do not try to talk about every single female character in responding to this question but limit your analysis to a few so that your statements are not too broad.
  6. Create your own topic: Check it with me BEFORE you write the paper; you should run your proposed paper topic by me before or after the class before the paper is due. I must approve the topic.