

engl 245/cwl 267 second essay: close reading

description

This assignment gives you the opportunity to practice balancing analysis and comprehension in a formalist style close reading. In it, you will analyze one of the short stories from our reading list (excluding “Hills Like White Elephants” and “Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been”) in terms of its genre, form, and content. As we have discussed in class, this type of text-based analysis is known as “close reading.”

Your close reading will essentially answer the following: what is this story really about beyond the surface of the text, and how do you know? More than merely a summary and more than merely an affective opinion, you should use this space to submit an *analysis* of the novel, using one or more of the strategies we have identified for being a Person Who Notices (Stuff): trace a pattern, identify the function of a particular character and the relationships among characters, or parse a seemingly bizarre moment. Using the critical reading skills we have practiced in class, your essay should make an *argument* about a particular element of the story you have chosen. Why is your way of reading a good or important way of reading the text? What does it illuminate for other readers?

You will not be consulting outside critical sources for this essay. This particular assignment is interested in *your* reading of the texts. If for some reason you feel strongly that you need to consult another source for this essay, come talk to me.

content

Your **introduction** should begin by naming your texts and giving some general characterization of them. You should provide an explanation of your methodology in your attempt to make meaning out of these stories—what were you looking for as you read and re-read the text? Raise the preliminary questions you intend to address in your analysis. Finally, you should provide a specific *thesis*, or argument, which explicitly and concisely states your proposed answer to those questions. As always, your thesis should demonstrate critical thinking and analysis. Note: your introduction may be more than one paragraph, and your thesis may be more than one sentence.

Once you have established the terms for your analysis, your **body paragraphs** should each function as unified “mini-claims” which work to support your larger thesis. In other words, your body paragraphs will contain the elements which validate your stated interpretation of the text. Your paragraphs should be organized according to your ideas, **not** your quotations, and **not** the story’s plot. Each paragraph should make an original statement or observation about the text, provide specific evidence from the text to support the plausibility of that observation, and identify what the implications of that observation are for

your larger thesis. (As an organizational tool, consider using the SEXI paragraph: Statement, Evidence, eXplanation, Implications.)

Your **conclusion** should not simply restate your introduction. Instead, identify the ways in which your reading extracts value from the stories beyond the surface level; what's useful or important about understanding the texts in this particular way? How does your unique perspective contribute to an academic understanding of this text? What does it reveal about the texts that's especially urgent?

format

Please follow MLA guidelines for citation and formatting, including your paper's heading (see below). Links to the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) are posted on the course website. Your paper should be typed, double-spaced in Times New Roman or Calibri font, one-inch margins all around, MLA-style headings (no cover page). Your Works Cited page will need to include a full citation for your story, and you will need to include in-text citations in the body of your paper as well.

	Lastname 1
Firstname Lastname	
Ms. E. Vigiletti	
English 245	
3 May 2015	
	Descriptive Title

This essay is due on the Thursday, October 29, as a hard copy in class. It is worth 100 points, 20% of your overall course grade.