

engl 245/cwl 267 final essay: analysis in context

description

The last formal writing assignment for this class will integrate the skills you have practiced in both critical summary and response as well as close reading. For the central task, you may choose one of the following options:

1. Seek out a short story that was *not* on our syllabus for this course and write a critical essay about it, integrating at least two other stories from the syllabus.
2. Revise and expand either your Summary/Response essay or your Close Reading essay by reading and analyzing at least three other stories by the same (or a related) author.

*Note: if you would like to write about *Yokohama, California* as a collection you can follow the instructions for option 2. In that case, you will not need to find any additional stories by Toshio Mori.

In either case, your project will be, at its core, a text-based close reading. You will still essentially be answering the question: what is this text about below the surface, and how do you know? But your argument will make extensive use of multiple sources, both primary and secondary.

The assignment will ultimately unfold in three parts: a proposal, a paper, and an in-class presentation. The paper, weighted the most heavily of the three elements by far, must be a minimum of 2000 words—around 7 pages. You will also need to use a minimum of 3 secondary sources, 2 of which will need to be scholarly.

part 1: proposal

In the first phase of the final essay project, you will turn in a **300-word proposal** for workshopping. Your proposal will name your final essay's topic and the central question that will drive its argument. You should proceed to elucidate the primary texts your essay will center on and the types of secondary sources that you will most heavily rely on. What will be your method for "noticing s[tuff]" in this essay?

Your proposal should also explain your research's interest: how will your project contribute to the academic conversation about these stories? What elevates your essay from advanced comprehension to analysis? Finally, you should state a tentative thesis. At this stage, your thesis doesn't need to be as concrete or specific as the thesis for your paper; it can even be in the form of a question.

At the end of your proposal, you will need to **include a short annotated bibliography of at least 5 of the sources you expect to use**. Provide an MLA citation of the source followed by a one-sentence descriptive summary and then a one-sentence explanation of how you will use the source in your essay.

Bring your proposal to class as a hard copy on Tuesday, November 17. This part of the project is worth 30 points.

part 2: the paper

content

Whichever task you choose for your project, your paper's **introduction** should begin by naming your texts and giving some general characterization of them. Your paper will need to go beyond merely comparing or contrasting the stories—your introduction needs to make a case for reading your primary texts together, so that doing so would make sense even if it wasn't in response to a prompt. Raise the preliminary questions you intend to address in your analysis and give a preview of how you intend to address them—in other words, what kind of analysis are you performing, and what kinds of outside sources are you consulting? 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.

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 stories' plots. Each paragraph should make an original statement or observation about the texts, provide specific evidence to support the plausibility of that observation using sources, 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.)

For option 1, your conclusion should address our course syllabus directly. The story you found yourself wasn't included on our syllabus. Should it have been? If it should have, where would it have fit in? How can you talk about that story in terms of our course concepts?

For option 2, your conclusion should reflect on the original essay that prompted your final project. How is this paper different from its predecessor? Where does the influence of your earlier argument remain? Consider Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's TED Talk: how is writing about multiple stories by an author different from writing about one? (*Yokohama, California* papers need only address the last question.)

other parameters/guidelines

To find your supplemental stories, you may use the Lawn anthology, or locate a story through the library or even a service like projectgutenberg.org.

Though the minimum number of secondary sources is 3, you can use as many as you want. At least 2 of the sources should be scholarly—follow the same instructions for finding these as you did in your Summary/Response essay. The non-scholarly source can be more archival—newspaper articles, reviews, biographies, nonfiction essays written by the story author, etc. Prohibited sources include Wikipedia, Cliffs Notes-style websites, blogs, or other non-vetted sites like about.com.

format

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.

For this essay, proper citations are key. Pay special attention to their accuracy and completeness. **I will not accept papers that are not properly cited.**

Firstname Lastname Ms. E. Vigiletti English 245 3 May 2015	Lastname 1	Descriptive Title
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The paper is due via email attachment on Thursday, December 10. It is worth 100 points. If you would like feedback, be sure to ask for it in the body of your email.

part 3: presentation

The presentation component of your project will be completed as groups. Your discussion group will collectively give a 15-minute presentation for the rest of the class that summarizes each of your projects and explains how they are related to one another. Perhaps two of you took a similar approach to different texts, or the same approach to different texts. Perhaps your projects were all dramatically different. Can you find a thread that links them together?

This part of the project isn't meant to be taxing or stressful; it's serving two purposes: 1. to help you work through your argument by having you articulate it out loud to your peers, and 2. to let everyone hear about the interesting things other people are doing, in a way that's more efficient than an informal class discussion.

format

Set up your presentation thusly:

1. Introduction (2-3 minutes): someone from your group should introduce everyone and list everyone's project. Give a general characterization of how connected your projects were.
2. Summaries (3 minutes each): each of you takes turns summarizing your argument to the class and articulating the rewards and/or challenges of figuring out how to make it. You'll need to transition smoothly between presenters, i.e. "Like Percival, I too wrote about "Metamorphosis," or "I also consulted newspaper sources, except my project focused on. . . ."
3. Conclusion (1 minute): someone from your group should offer a closing remark: could you agree on your favorite thing about the project? The most challenging thing?

Your presentation will need to show some evidence of being practiced; you will not be able to go over the 15-minute time limit. A visual aid such as a slide presentation might help you move things along, but keep everything clean, legible, and relevant.

This part of the project is worth 20 points. Your presentations will take place on December 1 and 3.