**The Cosmopolitan Codex: Writing Back to the Canon**

**Major Writing Assignment #1**

**Confessions of a Close-reader**

What is close-reading? As readers, we have worked through non-fiction, poetry, and fiction together as a class. You have written journal entries and discussion posts that engages with *specific* language within a text, now is the time to test those close-reading muscles we’ve been training. For this assignment, you will write a **4-5 page paper** that performs analysis of **one** of the texts we have read or fits the criteria specified at the end of this Assignment Sheet.

In this paper, I would like you to work through **what the text does**, **focusing on how its word choices, sentence structure, rhyme scheme, narrative structure contribute to the execution of the text’s larger themes.** Besides providing a thorough analysis of specific passages in the text, the paper must also include **an argumentative and interpretative thesis** that brings these smaller observations together into one coherent narrative. You are welcome to choose any facet of a text that interests you, but you may also work from one of the prompts I have listed below.

Remember, **summary** means telling me what happens (Kathy introduces herself); **identification** means recognizing what is happening (Kathy introduces herself by stating her name, age, and her profession); **close-reading** means connecting what you have identified to the rest of the text: what does it mean that she has chosen these three things to introduce herself? What is the effect of having a character named Kathy H. (instead of Kate Hudson, or Katherine Earnshaw, or K. Howard)? Why is “carer” not capitalized, and why is it significant that she stresses she’s been a carer for eleven years? **(That was an example of the questions answered in close-reading. Please do not answer them in your entry.)** **Your paper should move beyond summary and identification, demonstrating a sustained close reading of the text.** This paper is not an opinion piece. Do not tell me whether the text is “good” or “bad” (avoid using phrases such as “I think” or “I believe”), focus instead on describing and analyzing why and how it works.



* **Proposal due \_\_\_, Rough Draft due \_\_\_, Final Draft due \_\_\_. All of these will be due at 11:59 PM on ICON.**
* MWA #1 is worth 15% of your grade. Even though there will only be a grade on your final draft, I am grading the assignment as a **process** not a product. Thus, your submissions for the Proposal and Rough Draft, as well as your participation during Peer Review Workshops in class will all be part of what I am evaluating and can potentially affect your final assignment grade.
* 4-5-full pages double-spaced, 12 pt. Times New Roman font, with 1-inch margins on all sides. Works Cited and poem lyrics are not included in the page count.
* Use proper MLA format—your paper should look like this: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/13/>
* Use proper in-text citations: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/02/>
* Include a separate Works Cited page that is formatted in MLA. This page should list the primary text. If you have questions about how to format internet sources, please see me.
* If you are analyzing a poem we have not read in class, please include the title, poet name, and full lyrics at the very end of your paper.



**A Note on the Text**

You are welcomed and encouraged to choose a poem that we have not read for this assignment. Please run your poem choices by me via your MWA#1 Proposal, you are welcome to come and discuss your choices before or after the Proposal is due (if you’re unsure what to pick or if you want to change your Proposal after submission). You only have 4-5 pages, so don’t choose something that is as long as *The Odyssey.*

You can write about any **poem, short story, or novel** that is on our syllabus. With that said*,* you must write on a different text for each assignment, and please do not attempt to turn in a draft of any assignment without having fully read the text you’re analyzing.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Rubric** | **A** | **B** | **C** |
| **CONTENT:**  Introduction | Expertly and creatively engages reader.  Identifies topic of paper and fluidly transitions/builds towards thesis statement.  Thesis statement clearly **interprets the text**, by stating what it is doing and how it is doing so via elements in the text.  Author offers an overview of the organizational structure of the essay, previewing the main points and the types of evidence that will be used in support of the thesis. | Thoughtfully engages reader.  Identifies topic and provides transition to thesis.  Provides a thesis that states what the text is doing. Overview of main points is provided.  Some of these elements may not be clearly or completely expressed. | Some engagement of reader.  Topic identified before transition to thesis.  Thesis states topic of text and connects to elements in the text, but it is not clear what the text is doing or how it is doing so.  Overview of paper’s main points may be unclear. |
| **CONTENT:**  Body | Author attends to context in a manner that enriches their overall argument.  Author offers developed analysis of elements that support the interpretation.  Each paragraph is directly related to the thesis and articulates an important element of support for the thesis.  The connection between paragraphs is clear and transitions are smooth. | Author addresses context.  Author offers an analysis of elements that support the interpretation.  Paragraphs are related to the thesis and provide some support.  There is a connection between paragraphs. | Author’s mention of context may be under or over developed.  Author offers elements in the text to support interpretation, but each element is not equally developed.  Paragraphs are related in some way to thesis. |
| **CONTENT:**  Close-reading in Body Paragraphs | The text is quoted/paraphrased with at least **one** specific example, **and** the student clearly connects their ideas to the passage.  The student uses their explanation of the text in order to deepen their thoughts or explore a new idea. The student explores how the author’s word choice, writing style, and use of literary elements deepens the passage’s meaning.  The student expands upon and extends class lectures. The student offers a new, unique, well-developed idea.  Author correctly cites sources in a consistent citation style (MLA). | The text is quoted/paraphrased with at least **one** specific example, **and** the student connects their ideas to the passage.  The student explains the ways in which the text works. The student identifies how the author’s word choice, writing style, and use of literary elements deepens the passage’s meaning.  The student expands upon and extends class lectures. The student shares an original idea.  Author cites sources consistently in a specific citation style (MLA). | The text is referenced, and the student makes an attempt to connect their ideas to the passage.  The student makes an effort to explain the ways in which the text is working. However, this tends toward summary rather than analysis. The student doesn’t identify how the author makes meaning in the passage.  The ideas are rehashed from discussion or from the internet with little attempt to think in a new way. The post is more like a book report.  Direct quotations are included but they may be unclear or awkward within the author’s prose.  Author cites most sources properly (MLA). |
| **CONTENT:**  Conclusion | Conclusion is clearly related to the thesis.  Reviews main points of paper, but continues on to eloquently address “so what” questions such as contribution and implications of the topic under discussion. | Conclusion is related to the thesis.  Reviews main points of paper, and attempts to address larger questions relevant to subject. | Conclusion may not clearly relate to the focus of the paper.  Conclusion may be too short. |
| **MECHANICS:**  Clarity of Expression | Evidence of careful proofreading. Exemplary sentence and paragraph structure. Clear, meaningful, and elegant sentences using careful wording to communicate author’s insights. | Evidence of proofreading. Sentences and paragraphs are clear and effectively communicate author’s insights. | Paper lacks support that proofreading has occurred. Sentences are generally clear and communicate author’s insights. |
| **MECHANICS:**  Formatting | Essay includes title, in-text citations (when necessary), Works Cited page. Essay is 12 point TNR font with 1” margins, double-spaced. | Only one of the following may be missing: Title, 12 point TNR font, 1” margins, double-spaced. | Essay is missing title, Works Cited page, or in-text citations. Essay is missing elements of the following: 12 point TNR font with 1” margins, double-spaced. |
| Comments | | | |
|  | | | |