“Madness and Desire”

**Selected poems about poetry:**

Consider your responses to the assigned poems (Archibald MacLeish’s “Ars Poetica,” Czeslaw Milosz’s “Ars Poetica?”, Elizabeth Alexander’s “Ars Poetica #100: I Believe,” and Marianne Moore’s “Poetry”). Which poem most accurately expresses your view of what poetry is, what it does, and how we should read it? Why and how so? What does your choice say about you? Write a paragraph in which you reflect on how one of the poems expresses, reinforces, refines, or perhaps challenges your view of poetry.

**Margaret Edson’s *Wit***

Choose **one** of the following questions to answer:

1. Dr. Vivian Bearing is a scholar famous for her command of language. Yet there are instances in the play where she loses command over language. Where are these instances during which she cannot say what she means or what she wants to say, and what is she trying to express? In Vivian’s experience, what is it that cannot be encapsulated in language?
2. Two types of “texts” are presented as being scrutinized in this play: bodies (particularly ill bodies, like Vivian’s) and literary texts. What are the differences and similarities between the types of “textual analysis” exacted by literary scholars and medical professionals as portrayed in this play?
3. What is the role of “wit” in this play?

**Thinking about the upcoming paper assignment:**

In one coherent paragraph (with a topic sentence, concluding sentence, and quotes/evidence for support), start to work through your ideas for the final paper assignment by choosing **one topic** from the options listed on the assignment sheet (at least to start) and explaining how you think, thus far in your reading, the text explores this subject.

“Literary Classics Adapted”

**Blog Post 1:**

Option 1: Have you ever watched a movie that was an adaptation of a book? Did you read the book before or after watching the movie? Why did you make this decision? How did the film differ from the book? Which did you prefer?

Option 2: Compare/contrast film and literature as genres. How, in your opinion, are they different? How are they similar? What can film do that literature can’t (and why)? What can literature do that film can’t (explain)? Do you think there are certain types of stories that work better as either films or literary texts? Why? Which genre (film or literature) do you tend to prefer and why?

**Blog Post 2: *Hamlet* (2000)**

Option 1: After watching *Hamlet* (2000), explain in what ways the film exhibits **fidelity** (see Hutcheon PDF) to the play. After discussing the ways in which the two “texts” are similar, *explain* your thoughts on whether fidelity to the originary text makes for a “better” film adaptation.

Option 2: Can you identify one *motif* or *theme* that is present in both Michael Almereyda’s *Hamlet* and Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* but that is re-imagined and/or modernized in the film? Why might this modification appeal more to or better resonate with a 21st-century audience? Explain.

**Blog Post 3 Prompt**

Option 1: Explain the relationship between human childbirth and/or childrearing and the monster’s creation and care as portrayed by Mary Shelley. How does Mary Shelley suggest a parallel (similarities) between the two? And what might be the purpose of making this comparison? Explain using specific quotes for references (and cite appropriately).

Option 2: Thus far, do you think that Mary Shelley views “monstrosity” as something that is inherent within a creature (from “birth”) or something that is developed through improper socialization and mistreatment? Use the unnamed creature in *Frankenstein* as an example, and make sure to quote specific lines from the book to support your claims (and cite appropriately).

**Blog Post 4 Prompt**

Before watching the 1931 *Frankenstein* film, available to stream via ICON, I would like you to read this article (note that there are two pages): [http://www.eugenicsarchive.org/html/eugenics/static/images/1596.html](https://email.uiowa.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=pz_Pj0q82k6fhhNK5EgOZbjfp-MAF9EIqRs9_ryEF2K5mBu1rWc9xROuyFTgSZEISOY8EkNck8U.&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.eugenicsarchive.org%2fhtml%2feugenics%2fstatic%2fimages%2f1596.html" \t "_blank)

and a PDF entitled "An Apparatus for the Culture of Whole Organs" (available in the Content section of ICON).

For your blog post, choose one of the two articles above and explain how the 1931 film engages with either eugenics (modifying biological makeup to produce "better" [note the scare quotes] people) or recent (in the 1930s) medical discoveries like the glass heart.

**Blog Post 5**

Update everyone on the progress of your final research project. Explain what you’ve done thus far. Consider the following talking points:

* What research have you done thus far? Did you encounter any difficulties while searching? What databases did you use? What search terms did you find useful or not useful? Have you found any sources that you’re going to use (mention titles)?
* What are you arguing in your paper? How has your thesis statement evolved? Have you had to change your argument in any way as you’ve worked on your project? Why? Are there any changes you foresee making to your argument?
* How do you plan to organize your paper? Have you made any changes to the organizational scheme since you drafted your outline?
* Have you started writing your paper? How is it going so far? Any success stories? Issues you’ve encountered? Any sections with which you’re struggling?
* Have you found any quotes that work well for your paper? What are they? Why do you think these quotes speak to your paper topic well?