

Analysis Paper (6-8 typed pages each)

Due Date: Due On or Before December 10

You will be given a specific, assigned text for this assignment. I will provide you with the text as a handout or assign one of the texts from the *Norton* that we did not discuss in class.

This paper crafts a close reading that explains some aspect about the text's historical, literary, or cultural significance. This paper puts the tools of the class to work, but these tools are not the explicit focus of your analysis. In other words, we love to read and write about literature not because we are primarily fascinated with poetic meter or because we want to break down characterization or dig out symbols. These are tools that help us get at the issues that really matter—what are these works saying about humanity and how do these works contribute to literary history?

You may focus on explicating the assigned text's theme or its form or a combination of both. You may refer to other texts, but the focus of your argument should draw evidence from the assigned work of fiction or poetry to say something about its historical, literary, or cultural significance.

To assist your argument about the text's historical, literary, or cultural significance, you may need to conduct research in peer-reviewed journals or books. (Outside research is not required, but most topics will benefit from some type of outside research.) Helpful Resources that contain Peer-Reviewed Journals and Books on Literature: Stockton's College Library, MLA Database, and JSTOR.

Suggested Format:

- **Introduction:** Peak your reader's interest and focus your argument. You do not need to include a plot summary; assume your reader is familiar with the text. Introduce the aspect of the historical, literary, or cultural context that your analysis will illuminate.
 - **Thesis:** Place your thesis in the first or second paragraph. This thesis should be analytical rather than purely descriptive. For example, here is a thesis about
 - a text's literary significance: "Jane Doe's short story 'Family' redefines American realism through its experimentation with plot."
 - a text's historical significance: "Jane Doe's short story 'Family' responds to what many conservatives in the 1990s described as the 'Crisis of the Family.' The story criticizes this political debate through its portrayal of the protagonist."
 - a text's cultural significance: "Jane Doe's negative portrayal of American divorce in her story 'Family' ultimately crafts an argument for a new, more expansive way to define the American family."
 - **Focus!** Be careful your thesis doesn't bite off more than a 6-8 page paper can reasonably argue.
 - **Interest!** Make sure your reader understands (implicitly or explicitly) what makes this argument worthwhile. What will the reader gain from reading your argument?
- **Body:** The paper's support (approximately pages 2-8). Start each paragraph with a clear topic sentence that connects the evidence with a portion of the thesis.
- **Conclusion:** Can be brief—one paragraph. Wrap up your argument. You might consider talking about other issues your argument raises—aspect your focus did not allow you cover, but would be important for a longer paper. Finally, double check to make sure your concluding remarks match your thesis statement. Have you shifted directions? Come to a more specific set of conclusions? If so, revise your thesis to reflect these changes.

Before passing in each paper I encourage you to drop by my office hours to chat about your paper, look over your thesis statement, etc. **No revisions will be allowed.** Put your very best effort into the final drafts.