ENGL 111: “It’s the End of the World As We Know It”

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An overview of the major schools of literary criticism is provided to students with a focus on Panopticism for the particular texts we read.

Required texts:

*Brave New World* (5 weeks)

*King Lear* (3 weeks)

*Station Eleven* (5 weeks)

For all essays there are two days provided in class for peer review. After day one students are expected to take the essay home, make revisions, resolve comments, and bring back a clean copy the next day for another peer review. Students typically have 2-3 days to make final revisions before their final drafts are due to us for assessment.

When we return essays there are comments but no grades. Students have one week after essays are returned to submit a revision plan. Once a revision plan has been submitted for an essay we will enter the grade in Skyward. The revision plan guidelines are attached at the end of this assignment sequence.

**SA1 (2-3 pages)**

**Close reading of a scene in *Brave New World***

The purpose of this assignment is to give you practice writing a claim about a piece of literature and conducting a close textual analysis.

Close reading describes the careful, sustained interpretation of a brief passage or passages of a text. In this case you will choose the scene of your choice from *Brave New World*. It can be any scene from any point in the novel. Please note that part of the skill in this essay is choosing a scene that lends itself to literary analysis - not all of them do. A close reading pays close attention to elements such as imagery, tone, diction, syntax, point of view, contrasts and parallels, and symbols or motifs. A good close reading places the scene within the larger context of the story around it. You are looking for what is not obvious, the “subtext,” what is below the surface. Arguing for something obvious does not make a viable topic because no one would disagree with your assertions and we would not learn anything new. The point is not to simply make an argument that works, but to come up with an interesting and original claim that engages your readers’ intelligence.

Remember that you cannot use the scene on p. 142-145 for this assignment. Any scene from the rest of the novel is available for consideration.

**Writer’s Memo**

For all assignments in this sequence, unless otherwise directed, please include a writer’s memo at the end of your essay.

The Writer’s Memo should:

* Be ½-1 page double-spaced
* Briefly articulate what went well
* Briefly articulate areas of concern
* Articulate the major outcomes you see in this assignment and explain how you know

**SA2 (2-3 pages)**

**Persuasive letter utilizing rhetorical devices**

The purpose of this assignment is to give you practice using rhetorical devices to effectively persuade another person’s decisions.

For this paper, you will write an informal letter from one character to another. You may choose from *Brave New World* or *King Lear*. You will write from the first person point of view of the character you choose in order to persuade another character to make a certain decision, change their behaviors, or….whatever you choose. You must effectively use the following elements: ethos, pathos, and logos.

Though your letter is written informally, it should follow the basic organization of persuasive writing: introduction with identified thesis, points, counter/rebuttal, restate thesis-call to action. This letter needs to represent the voice of the character from whose perspective you are writing, therefore, it should be clearly in the character’s authentic language, point of view, and life experience. Feel free to use descriptive language. No MLA formatting requirements.

**SA3 (1-2 pages)**

**Book Review**

We are likely all familiar with online reviews in some form, whether from Amazon, Yelp, or some other online rating service. This essay is a chance for you to write a book review on a text we have read, following the conventions of the genre and the intended place of publication. You will choose the place of publication based on examples we will look at in class (and you will look at on your own) from publications/websites like Amazon, Goodreads, and *The* *New York Times.*

In approximately two double spaced pages or less, write a review of the text of your choice. Book reviews typically contain the following elements: a basic summary of the book, the reviewer’s thoughts on the quality of the book and recommendations for or against it, and reasons for the recommendation. Be as creative as you like.

After your review write one or two paragraphs of reflection on your rhetorical choices. What I’m looking for here is a discussion of why you made the choices you did based on genre, place of publication, information you wanted to convey, etc…. ***This will serve as the Writer’s Memo for this assignment so a discussion of outcomes would also be advisable.***

**SA4 (3-4 pages)**

**Intertextual Argument Essay**

Write a paper that explores a common element in *King Lear* and *Station Eleven*. Include specific passages from each text to develop your ideas and show that they truly emerge from the course texts. Carefully select passages from the texts to demonstrate that you did a close reading of the texts and can show connections between them.

In this essay you will make a claim about a common element between these two texts. You must be persuasive in order to show how the two elements are connected even though it may not seem so at first glance. These elements need not be the same thing literally in the two texts - in fact, they will probably not be. Instead think of prominent textual elements that serve the same function in both texts. Possible elements include, but are not limited to, parallel characters, prominent metaphors, similar settings, or common disruptive forces.

**SA5 (2-3 pages)**

**Research Proposal**

For this essay and your Major Paper, you have two choices as to directions to take.

Option A: You will identify an issue raised in one of our texts and research its implications in the world outside our classroom. That could mean you see our dependence on technology as an issue raised by *Station Eleven* or *Brave New World* and want to research that. Whatever the issue it’s your job to conduct research and initiate a line of inquiry, eventually arriving at your research question. The answer to your question will be your claim and essay for your major paper.

Option B: A more traditional literary analysis essay. Research and write about a literary element in one of the texts we read this semester.

You will be working with this topic for the rest of the semester so choose carefully and be sure it is something you want to work with and research for an extended period of time. SA 5 is not a traditionally structured essay. It’s okay for it to be less formal but keep in mind it is still the first step in an academic project. It should communicate the following:

1. The element or issue in one of our texts that stood out to you and which you are using as your springboard to a larger research project.
2. At least three sources, annotated (summary and assessment paragraphs), that you have found in your research as possible sources to use in your major paper.
3. Your initial research question. This will likely change and become more refined and complex as you work, but you have to start someplace.
4. Explore your potential lines of inquiry. What have you found so far in your research? What other research will you need to do? In what ways has your focus shifted based on your research so far?

**MP (5-7 pages)**

**Research Paper**

Your final research paper for this class! You will take the refined research question from SA 5 and use it to create your claim for this essay. The broad assignment is laid out in the description for SA 5: choose Option A or Option B and decide whether you will be focused on the text itself or on issues raised by the text but found in the world around us.

You have a lot of freedom with sources for this essay. They do not have to all be academic sources but they do all have to be reliable and accurate - remember our work on this from fall semester.

Rough Draft #1 Due: peer review in class

Rough Draft #2 Due: peer review in class

Submit MP Rough Draft to Classroom: (provide comments during student conferences)

Final Draft Due: In Portfolio

Revision Plan Guidelines

UW English — Russell/Fankhauser

University of Washington Expository Writing Program Outcomes:

**To practice composing as a recursive, collaborative process and to develop flexible strategies for revising through the composition process by:**

4.1: engaging in a variety of (re)visioning techniques, including (re)brainstorming, (re)drafting, (re)reading, (re)writing, (re)thinking, and editing;

4.2: giving, receiving, interpreting, and incorporating constructive feedback;

4.3:refining and nuancing composition choices for delivery to intended audience(s) in a manner consonant with the genre, situation, and desired rhetorical effects and meanings.

Now that you have your essay back with comments, the next step is to draft a revision plan. You may not actually revise this essay (not all are required to be revised for the portfolio) but reflection is an important part of the writing process.

In the gradebook (Skyward) you will see a blank grade column. In order to have your grade for this essay entered you must write and return to me a revision plan for this essay. Submit this with your essay, my comments, the rubric, and anything else you originally submitted with the essay. Once I have approved the revision plan I will enter the grade in Skyward.

Here are the guidelines for your revision plan:

1. Be thoughtful. You are using my comments as your guide but don’t simply repeat them back to me. Think about them and consider what they mean for your essay.
2. Be specific. Point out particular passages you could change. For example, writing “I will be more specific in my next draft” is not specific enough and will not be approved by me. Also not acceptable is something like “I’m going to fix all the comma splices that were marked.” Grammar is important but it’s also the easiest part of an essay to fix so writing only about grammar or mechanics in your revision plan will not be acceptable. But writing “In paragraph three on page two, I am going to change \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ because it makes how I write about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ much more specific and this impacts the reading experience in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ way” is much more appropriate. This is indicative of the level of thought I am looking for.
3. If you are unsure of how to write something like this, come ask me — This is what I am here for!
4. You have one week from the date I return your essay to submit your revision plan. If you do not do so, your grade for the essay will be entered as a zero. Don’t rush to submit it the next day. I give you a week so you have some time to give it real thought.
5. How long should it be? As long as it needs to be to thoughtfully discuss the changes that need to be made. This will be different for each of you.
6. This is a conversation between you and me - don’t stress! What an opportunity to really reflect on your work and improve it. I am excited to take this journey with you!