

ENGLT 345/Essay Assignment

Due Date:

Requirements:

- 1 Minimum 5 pages double-spaced (12-point font, 1 inch margins, etc.).**
- 2 Include a title and the correct heading (we'll cover this in class).**
- 3 If secondary ("outside") sources are used, you must give them the proper credit in the body of your essay, and you must include a Works Cited page presented in the correct MLA format (If you need help with this, let me know).**

For your Essay Assignment, you have several choices. You may choose from the following:

1. Select a particular theme, image (or pattern of images), archetype, literary device, character, etc. that appears in at least THREE of the works we've discussed this semester and analyze its presentation and/or purpose in the three works. One way to approach this essay might be by means of comparison/contrast analysis (i.e. the different ways in which the archetypal "trickster figure" is presented in three of the works). Or, you may find that a significant aspect is presented almost identically in all three works and come to some conclusion as to what is significant about these identical presentations.
2. Select a text we have NOT read for this class that you find to be similar in some significant ways(s) – such as plot, structure, theme(s), characters, archetypal images – to something we HAVE read for class and analyze the significant connections between the two texts. **Note: The designation "text we have NOT read for this class" is very open to interpretation; it may be a poem, novel, play, short story, TV show, film, etc. It may be contemporary (i.e. a film that came out a few years ago) or much older (a novel from the 18th century, a Shakespeare play, etc.).**
3. One of the essential features of mythology is that it reflects some significant aspects of the culture from which it originates. Choose a myth or myths from a particular culture and discuss it in terms of what it reflects about the culture (and perhaps the time period in history) from which it originated. What values, ideals, and beliefs of the culture are apparent? What significant things does it tell us about how that particular culture lived at that time? **Note: For this option, you may talk about one myth we read and discussed for class AND another from the same culture that we did not read and discuss (i.e. you might choose one of the Norse myths we discussed and research another that you were not assigned).**
4. A significant theme of this course is *storytelling*. We've discussed why we tell stories, how we tell them, the connections between stories told in all different time periods all

over the world, how storytelling impacts us, etc.; choose a story – either one we have discussed in class or one we have not – and analyze it in terms of some aspect(s) of storytelling we have discussed. For example, you might look at two translations of the same text and compare and contrast them, discussing how the difference in translations affects the telling of the story. Or, you might compare and contrast a story that is clearly part of an oral tradition with one that is not and discuss the similarities and differences in impacts on the reader/audience. Or, you might analyze one story in terms of the various techniques used in telling it – narrative point of view, repetition, structure, etc.

For whichever topic you choose, a few things to remember:

- Your essay must include a relevant, clearly stated thesis which presents your overall analysis of the topic
- Your essay must have a college-level essay structure, including an introduction and thesis, several unified and well-developed body paragraphs, and a conclusion
- Your essay should NOT merely be a summary of the events of a particular text or texts. Although some summary may be necessary in introducing your points, the majority of your essay should be made up of specific analysis of the texts and particular aspects of those texts. Don't just tell what happened; show what it *means*.
- Your essay should reflect college level writing skills and be free from serious errors such as fragments, run-ons, verb form/tense issues, pronoun reference problems and numerous distracting errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, etc. Be sure to proofread carefully!
- Your essay must be free of plagiarism, whether intentional or unintentional. To that end, be sure to give credit to any "outside" source (any article, critical interpretation, reference material, etc. other than the original text(s) you're analyzing) that you incorporate into your essay. All exact words borrowed from an outside source must be presented in quotation marks and credited through the use of parenthetical citations; likewise, any paraphrased or summarized material must be credited as well. Be sure to include a Works Cited page, presented in correct MLA format, at the end of your essay (this does not count as an actual "page" in the page count of the essay! ☹) If you are unsure as to what constitutes plagiarism or how to avoid plagiarism, I'd be happy to discuss this with you. I will also direct you toward materials that I think will be helpful to you.

If you have any questions, please see me as soon as possible.

NOTE 1: The above essay prompts ARE open to some "interpretation." If you have an

idea for something that *seems* to fit one of the above prompts, but you're not sure, please feel free to talk to me about it. Or, if you would like to do something that doesn't seem to be included above, please come talk to me. Keep in mind, though, that you will also be doing a presentation, and that your presentation topic needs to be different than the one you chose for this essay, so if something doesn't work for this assignment, you can most likely still use it for your presentation.

NOTE 2: When choosing things about which to write, be sure that you choose texts that fit our class' definition of *myth/mythology* – look for stories that have a particular purpose – e.g. to explain a phenomenon, to illustrate something about a culture, to teach a moral lesson, etc. Please let me know if you have questions about your chosen text(s).