

General Studies 146ZB: Encounters

Whitman College – Spring 2012

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Mon 1:00-2:30 & Fri 9:30-11:00

Course Description

(My Version)

This is a multi-, cross-, and inter-disciplinary course of Great Works about Big Ideas (which does *not* imply that they're the *greatest* works and the *biggest* ideas!). Our material is profound, which means that it's both difficult and rewarding. These are works that are worth examining for their own sake, and also because they have had significant impact on the development of human culture and understanding. They're *that* good. (And note that this course is moving toward geographic and cultural inclusiveness, but isn't all the way there yet. So the majority of our works are still "Western," but that's no longer its sole focus.)

This course is also meant to be an introduction to some (but not all!) of the academic skills that you'll need to succeed in college: close reading, insightful textual analysis, productive discussion, and clear and compelling writing. Its small size and continuity across the semesters should help you make sustained progress on those skills. So in both content and form, this course is intended to be a (not *the!*) foundation or "core" of your work at Whitman.

And actually, the development of the skills can't be separated from the examination of the content: only Great Works about Big Ideas require close reading and insightful analysis through group discussion and writing. And what, exactly, it takes for the reading, analysis, discussion, and writing to be successful will be dictated by the particular ways in which the works are great and the ideas are big. In other words, there are no set formulas for analysis in discussion and writing; they'll need to be tailored to each particular work.

Course Goals

- To develop your skills of close reading and critical analysis of texts which are very difficult and often conceptually distant.
- To create a fun and supportive conversational space in which you are encouraged by both your peers and by me to be intellectually ambitious and vulnerable.
- To create an intellectually stimulating environment that encourages you to discover "the life of the mind" from out of the power of your own insights into these formative texts.
- To retool your high school writing skills by having you work on your writing process, focusing on how to have an idea that you are genuinely intellectually invested in, and how to develop and support that idea through carefully structured analysis and writing.

Class Format

One of the main purposes of Encounters is to help students *personally engage* difficult texts like the ones we read and view. While I will sometimes present background information, alternative interpretations, or so on, those occasions will be rare and brief. The bulk of our class time will be spent actively working with the readings and the larger issues that they suggest, through whole-class and small-group discussions and other activities. More details about expectations for individual participation are provided on a separate handout.

For this class to work, everyone in the room must be *fully mentally present*. Turn off your cell phone, put away your other work, and really focus on the conversation. If you find that you're too drowsy or too distracted by something else to concentrate, you should simply (and unobtrusively) step out of the room. Otherwise, I may interrupt class to ask you to leave.

High Tech

- I will often distribute important announcements, reminders, and clarifications through e-mail. One of your responsibilities for this course is to *check your Whitman e-mail account every day*.
- There is also an e-mail list-server set up for the class, which you are welcome to use. Messages sent to gens146zb_12sp@lists.whitman.edu will be forwarded to everyone in our section.
- The main Encounters website (http://www.whitman.edu/general_studies/encounters.htm) has a variety of useful information and links.

Required Texts

Hacker, Diana. *A Pocket Style Manual*. 5th ed. New York: Bedford / St. Martin's, 2008. Print.

A good dictionary (You can't understand the readings if you don't know what the words mean!)

Augustine. *Confessions*. Trans. R.S. Pine-Coffin. New York: Penguin Books, 1961. Print.

The Broken Spears: The Aztec Account of the Conquest of Mexico. Trans. Miguel León-Portilla. Boston: Beacon Press, 1962. Print.

Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness and Other Tales*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008. Print.

Descartes, René. *Discourse on Method*. 3rd ed. Trans. Donald Cress. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1998. Print.

Euripides. *Euripides III*. Ed. David Greene and Richmond Lattimore. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958. Print.

Frayn, Michael. *Copenhagen*. New York: Anchor Books, 2000. Print.

Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. *Poems, Protest, and a Dream*. Trans. Margaret Sayers Peden. New York: Penguin Books, 1997. Print.

Morrison, Toni. *Beloved*. New York: Vintage Books, 1987. Print.

Plato. *Symposium*. Trans. Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1989. Print.

Shakespeare. *The Tragedy of Othello the Moor of Venice*. Ed. Russ McDonald. New York: Penguin, 2001. Print.

Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1985. Print.

Summary of Requirements and Grading

Class Participation	25%
Ten Weekly Paragraphs	15% together
First 1000-Word Essay and Rewrite	15% (averaged)
Second 1000-Word Essay	15%
Final Portfolio	30%

Detailed explanations of each of these components are provided on a separate handout.

**** NOTE: You *cannot* pass the class if:**

1. You miss 9 or more class meetings *for any reason*.
2. You miss 3 or more of the weekly paragraphs *for any reason*.
3. You miss or fail either of the 1000-word essays, the rewrite, or the final portfolio assignment *for any reason*.

Academic Honesty

All of the work that you submit in this course must be entirely your own. You have signed a statement indicating that you understand and will abide by the College policy on academic honesty and plagiarism, and you will be held responsible for it. Of course, you can seek help in a variety of ways as you prepare your paragraphs and essays. But it is not permitted for you to use someone else's words or ideas in your written work without giving proper acknowledgment. Even if it's an accident, it's still plagiarism!

If you are unsure what, exactly, constitutes plagiarism, you should make it your business to find out: (re)read the statement you signed and the relevant part of the Student Handbook, talk with your academic adviser, and/or talk with me. If you are unsure how to include proper citations, you should consult Hacker's *Pocket Style Manual*.

Plagiarism will *not* be tolerated in any form. All cases of plagiarism will be reported to the Office of the Dean of Students. A student with a prior violation of Whitman's policy on academic honesty and plagiarism will have a hearing with the Council on Student Affairs, and may face expulsion from the College. A student without any prior violation of Whitman's policy on academic honesty and plagiarism will receive a zero for the assignment, and will also still need to complete it at a level comparable to her or his other work in order to receive a passing grade for the course.

Schedule of Readings & Assignments

Wed. Jan. 18 Plato, *Symposium*, pp. 1-39

Fri. Jan. 20 Plato, *Symposium*, pp. 40-60

⇒ for the first part of the semester, group #1 = Monday, group #2 = Wednesday, and group #3 = Friday

Mon. Jan. 23 Plato, *Symposium*, pp. 61-77

Wed. Jan. 25 Augustine, *Confessions*, books 1-3

Fri. Jan. 27 Augustine, *Confessions*, books 4-6

Mon. Jan. 30 Augustine, *Confessions*, book 7

Wed. Feb. 1 Augustine, *Confessions*, books 8-9
** lecture by Prof. DiPasquale (English Dept.) in Cordiner Hall

Fri. Feb. 3 Augustine, *Confessions*, book 10

Mon Feb. 6 Shakespeare, *Othello*, acts I-II

Wed. Feb. 8 Shakespeare, *Othello*, act III

Fri. Feb. 10 Shakespeare, *Othello*, acts IV-V

⇒ **first essay due on Friday** (no weekly paragraph)

Mon. Feb. 13 Shakespeare, *Othello*, cont.

Wed. Feb. 15 Galileo, "Letter to the Grand Duchess Christina" (available on-line)

Fri. Feb. 17 Galileo, "Letter to the Grand Duchess Christina," cont.
** first essay due

Mon. Feb. 20 **NO CLASS – PRESIDENTS' DAY**

Wed. Feb. 22 Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, parts 1-3

Fri. Feb. 24 Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, part 4

⇒ **for the second part of the semester, group #2 = Monday, group #3 = Wednesday, and group #1 = Friday**

Mon. Feb. 27 Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, parts 5-6

Mon. Feb. 27 & Tue Feb. 28 @ 7:00 – screenings of *Rashomon* in Maxey Auditorium

Wed. Feb. 29 *Rashomon*

Wed. Feb. 29 @ TBA – lecture by Prof. Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto (NYU Dept of East Asian Studies)

Thu. Mar. 1 @ 7:00 – screening of *Rashomon* in Maxey Auditorium

Fri. Mar. 2 *Rashomon*

⇒ **rewrite first essay due on Friday** (no weekly paragraph)

Mon. Mar. 5 *Rashomon*
* participation self-evaluation due

Wed. Mar. 7 Frayn, *Copenhagen*, act I

Fri. Mar. 9 Frayn, *Copenhagen*, act II
** rewrite of first essay due

S P R I N G B R E A K

Mon. Mar. 26 Euripides, *Trojan Women*, all

Wed. Mar. 28 Euripides, *Trojan Women*, reread all

Fri. Mar. 30 New Testament, Romans 1-8

Mon. Apr. 2 New Testament, Romans 1-11

Wed. Apr. 4 New Testament, Romans 1-16

Fri. Apr. 6 *The Broken Spears*, chs. 1-7

⇒ **second essay due on Wednesday** (no weekly paragraph)

Mon. Apr. 9 *The Broken Spears*, chs. 8-15

Wed. Apr. 11 Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, "Loa for El Divino Narciso," pp. 195-239
** second essay due

Fri. Apr. 13 Sor Juana, "Response to the Most Illustrious Poetess ...," pp. 1-45

⇒ **for the third part of the semester, group #3 = Monday, group #1 = Wednesday, and group #2 = Friday**

Mon. Apr. 16 Sor Juana, "Response to the Most Illustrious Poetess ...," pp. 45-75

Wed. Apr. 18 Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, part 1
** lecture by Prof. Schmitz (History Dept.) in Cordiner Hall

Fri. Apr. 20 Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, part 2

Mon. Apr. 23 Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, part 3

Wed. Apr. 25 Morrison, *Beloved*, front-matter (but not the Foreward!) and pp. 1-59 [*red cover edition*]

Fri. Apr. 27 Morrison, *Beloved*, pp. 60-124

Mon. Apr. 30 Morrison, *Beloved*, pp. 125-95

Wed. May 2 Morrison, *Beloved*, part II

Fri. May 4 Morrison, *Beloved*, part III
* participation self-evaluation due

⇒ **start working on final portfolio** (no weekly paragraph)

Mon. May 7 Morrison, *Beloved*, cont.

* **Tue. May 15 FINAL PORTFOLIO DUE BY 4:00 P.M. (1000-word essay + writer's statement)**

Assignments & Expectations

One of the guiding principles of the design of Encounters as a whole is that the deepest engagement and insight about these very challenging texts and issues come about through **dialog**: each of us articulating ideas and questions about the texts in relation to the ideas and questions of others. This begins orally through the discussions and other activities in class, and continues in writing through your essays and the feedback on them. Improving our understanding of the texts goes hand-in-hand with improving our skills of discussion and writing. Thus, this course focuses on **discussion and writing as vehicles for textual analysis**. The different components of your grade, and the criteria for determining them, are designed to foster and evaluate that linkage.

CLASS PARTICIPATION (25% of your final grade)

Most of our time together will be spent in conversation about the readings and the issues and questions that they suggest. A successful conversation is one that generates new ideas, which are more sophisticated, provocative, and insightful than the ideas that any one person had beforehand. This will require openness and good will from the entire group, and thoughtful contributions by as many people as possible. It will also require different kinds of contributions: proposing interpretations, offering links to the text, making connections to others' ideas, posing questions about what is still vague or unclear, presenting potential complications or counterevidence, playing devil's advocate in order to bring in overlooked points of view, and taking intellectual risks by voicing ideas that may still seem questionable.

The paragraph assignments that you'll complete most weeks (see below) should also help you prepare for our class discussions by opening up some of the challenges and possibilities of the texts, and pushing you to begin developing your own interpretations of them. On days that you aren't assigned to complete a polished paragraph, you should still give careful attention to the prompts or other guiding questions that I've distributed. You should also identify any further issues, ideas, or questions that you think are interesting and worthwhile for us to examine together.

While focused preparation and attendance are crucial foundations, they are not yet participation; you'll also actually need to speak up and contribute productively in class. I hope that everyone will do that voluntarily – but if not, I will call on you anyway!

More details about grading standards are provided below. Note that your participation grade will be determined in part by a process of *self*-evaluation. Conscious attention to your involvement in class, and my feedback about it, should help you, and the class as a whole, improve as the year goes on. I will also be happy to meet with you at any point to talk about strategies for improving your participation.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS – OVERVIEW

Our section's writing assignments have been designed with several principles in mind:

1. **Outstanding writing requires a conscious understanding of writing itself.** One cannot improve one's academic writing through rote training. Instead, it's crucial to develop an explicit understanding of the different aspects of it and how they should work together. That self-consciousness will be developed throughout the semester, and will be very important for the final portfolio.
2. **There are different aspects of academic writing that can be worked on separately.** Most weeks, there will be a short assignment designed to focus attention on certain of those aspects in ways that are particularly linked to the week's reading. The longer essay assignments give you a chance to put the different pieces together and see their larger significance in the context of a more sustained textual analysis.
3. **Significant improvement requires risk-taking and experimentation.** Playing it safe will only allow you to refine the skills and techniques you already have; to improve your writing substantially, you will have to push yourself to try new things. But naturally, not every risk and experiment will be successful; development as a writer simply isn't always smooth. For this reason, your lowest two weekly paragraph grades will be dropped, and you will rewrite your first 1000-word essay based on my feedback (see below).
4. **Evaluation should recognize a process of development.** You aren't expected to be an expert writer when you arrive at Whitman, and so what matters most in the assessment of your work is what you are able to accomplish after you have had the opportunity to work through the semester's assignments and build on the feedback you receive. Thus the final portfolio that you submit at the end of the semester will determine a significantly larger portion (30%) of your overall grade than each of the essays you write during the semester (15%).

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS – DETAILS

Weekly Polished Paragraphs (15% of your final grade together)

Students will be divided into three groups, which will be matched to the three class-days of the week. (Those matches will rotate over the course of the semester, as indicated on the schedule in the syllabus.) Prior to your assigned day each week, in addition to the regular reading assignment and class preparation, there will be a two-part assignment for you to complete. You will begin with an activity designed to address one or more particular aspects of the writing process, and then you will build from that to the composition of a single polished paragraph. That combination of tasks should help you prepare for class discussion, and also better develop, articulate, and support your ideas about the readings as stepping-stones for the longer essays.

The paragraphs will be graded on a 10-point scale. It is necessary for you to complete both parts to receive a passing grade, but the grade itself will depend only on the quality of the polished paragraph. The paragraphs will be evaluated based on the applicable features of the course's Standards for Exemplary Writing (included below).

Everyone will write a paragraph for this Friday, to help identify your “baseline” in relation to the course’s (and Whitman’s) standards and expectations. This paragraph will receive extensive feedback, but it will not count towards your final grade. Of the remaining nine weekly paragraphs, your best seven will count equally toward your grade, and your lowest two will be dropped. That will give you an opportunity to push yourself and experiment, without jeopardizing your overall grade.

Because the weekly assignments are designed to contribute systematically to your skills as a thinker and a writer, you must complete them all. Missing an assignment will lower your overall grade for the course by one notch (e.g., from B+ to B), and missing three or more will result in automatic failure of the course.

Two 1000-Word Essays (15% of your final grade each)

Throughout the semester, you will write three complete essays, each focused on a single text. These essays will give you the opportunity to develop, articulate, and support your ideas more fully, building from the insights and skills developed through the weekly paragraph assignments. For each essay, you will also be asked to submit work that demonstrates significant attention to the writing process, such as freewriting, notes, outlines, earlier drafts, and so on.

Finally, you will be asked to submit an “Author’s Note” after you compose each essay, discussing your perception of the essay’s specific strengths and weaknesses in relation to your previous work. That note, and my feedback on it, will help you to develop the self-awareness that’s a necessary foundation for exemplary academic writing, and to help prepare you for the “Writer’s Statement” in the final portfolio.

The essays will be evaluated according to the features and goals identified in the course’s Standards for Exemplary Writing (included below).

Rewrite of the First Essay

As mentioned above, it takes time to understand the expectations expressed in the course’s Standards for Exemplary Writing and to learn how to meet them. Undoubtedly, there will be significant improvements that you’ll need to work hard to make. In order to jump-start that process, it will be quite helpful for you to try again, by rewriting that essay in light of the feedback you receive.

But it’s essential for your rewrite to be substantial; just fixing a few typos and adding a quotation or two isn’t productive. Thus, there will be a carefully-structured process for the rewrite:

1. Develop a specific written plan for improving the essay, drawing on the comments and suggestions provided. Don’t just recognize the goals you need to achieve; think about *how* you can better achieve them. If there are problems with the structure and organization, figure out how you can rearrange and/or make the steps of your argument clearer. If there are concerns about the strength of your view, develop the needed support and/or refine your ideas to match the text more accurately.

2. Meet with me to discuss your plan. You must have my approval before proceeding with the rewrite, to ensure that the changes will be deep enough and likely to improve the essay significantly.

If your rewrite shows significant work to make substantive improvements, then its grade will be averaged with the original grade. If your rewrite shows only superficial changes, then your original grade will stand.

Final Portfolio (30% of your final grade)

Your final assignment for the semester will be to submit a portfolio of written work that both demonstrates and explains the progress you've made over the course of the semester. Each portfolio will have two main components:

1. **A new 1000-word essay (2/3 of the portfolio grade)**

This will be your opportunity to demonstrate the analytical and writing skills that you have been working on throughout the semester. It should be your *best* work of the semester!

2. **A "Writer's Statement" and supporting materials (1/3 of the portfolio grade)**

This will be your opportunity to articulate your conscious understanding of the analytical and writing skills that you've been working on, and to assess your own development as a writer in relation to them. While the tone of your Writer's Statement can be somewhat informal, it should not be overly biographical or confessional. You should explain in your own words what constitutes exemplary writing, and discuss both the improvements that you think you've shown, as well as the key aspects that you most need to work on further. All of the claims that you make about your writing should be illustrated with citations to specific passages from your work. You should draw on the full range of writing that you've done: free-writing, drafts, polished paragraphs, mid-semester essays, your revised essay, and your final essay. And keep in mind that it may help to discuss some "duds," as well as some of your greatest successes. All of the materials you discuss should also be included in the portfolio.

(Note that your portfolio will be used not only to evaluate your work from the first semester, but also to help determine what you need to work on in the second semester. Shortly after we return from Summer Break, I'll meet with each student to discuss your portfolio and to strategize your work on writing and analysis in the spring.)

EXTENSION POLICIES

If you find yourself in an extraordinary circumstance, such as an illness or family emergency, you should first talk with one of Whitman's Powers That Be (Dean of Students, Counseling Center, etc.). In that case, I will be willing to make any reasonable accommodation to help you get back on track.

Under normal circumstances, these are the policies that will govern the course:

- (a) **Weekly Paragraphs** – Students who will miss class or be unable to complete an assignment because of a Whitman-sanctioned activity (such as a sport), a religious observance, or a pre-planned family

event (such as a wedding) should talk with me *in advance* to make other arrangements to complete that assignment. In such situations, accommodations will *not* be made after the fact.

- (b) 1000-Word Essays and Rewrite** – Each student will begin the semester with a “bank” of 7 **late-days**, to be used throughout the semester as she or he sees fit. There is no need to let me know in advance when you plan on using them – you may simply hand in one or more of the essays late, up to a total of 7 days. (Note that taking an extension on the rewrite will require you to complete and submit it over Spring Break. That’s your choice to make.)

A ‘day’ is a 24-hour period, starting from 11:00 a.m. on the day the essay is due. (So, for example, an essay submitted at 3:00 p.m. the day it was due would count as 1 day late; so would an essay submitted at 9:00 the next morning; an essay submitted at 10:00 p.m. the next day would count as 2 days late; etc.)

Once the bank is used up, *late assignments will not be accepted for credit*. (However, you still need to complete them all in order to pass the course.) So, I urge you to *use your bank very carefully!* You would be wise to put together a calendar with all of your assignments and exams in all of your classes, to help make sure that you have “bank” days available when you really *need* them.

- (c) Final Portfolio** – Because the final portfolio is already due at the very end of the final exam period, there is absolutely no possibility for an extension. If you won’t be able to complete it on time for any reason, you’ll need to talk with the Dean of Students to arrange for an Incomplete in the course.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

All of the work that you submit in this course must be entirely your own. You have signed a statement indicating that you understand and will abide by the College policy on academic honesty and plagiarism, and you will be held responsible for it. Of course, you can seek help in a variety of ways as you prepare your paragraphs and essays. But it is not permitted for you to use someone else’s words or ideas in your written work without giving proper acknowledgment. Even if it’s an accident, it’s still plagiarism!

If you are unsure what, exactly, constitutes plagiarism, you should make it your business to find out: (re)read the statement you signed and the relevant part of the Student Handbook, talk with your academic adviser, and/or talk with me. If you are unsure how to include proper citations, you should consult *Hacker’s Pocket Style Manual*.

Plagiarism will *not* be tolerated in any form. All cases of plagiarism will be reported to the Office of the Dean of Students. A student with a prior violation of Whitman’s policy on academic honesty and plagiarism will have a hearing with the Council on Student Affairs, and may face expulsion from the College. A student without any prior violation of Whitman’s policy on academic honesty and plagiarism will receive a zero for the assignment, and will also still need to complete it at a level comparable to her or his other work in order to receive a passing grade for the course.

Class Participation Standards

As with any conversation, you can't usefully participate in class if you don't have anything to contribute. So it is essential that you come to our meetings prepared:

- Read (and often re-read) the assigned text carefully before class.
- Use the weekly paragraph prompts and other questions posed as opportunities to pursue some of the interpretive challenges and possibilities of the texts. Take time to identify key ideas and passages in response. And above all: *don't settle for easy answers!*
- Identify further questions, themes, and ideas to discuss that stem from your own interests and insights.

With eighteen of us in the room, no one person needs to talk all of the time. As long as you are regularly involved in the discussion, the *quality* of your contribution is much more important than the *quantity* of time that you're speaking. There are many different ways of contributing, all of which are very important. You should work to find the forms of participation that are most effective for you. At the same time, I hope that you don't settle into a rut, but rather try different forms of participation on different occasions.

I understand that everyone has good days and not-so-good days; some of the readings and conversation topics will engage you more than others. Your participation grade will be based on your overall involvement throughout the semester. These are the grading criteria that will be used:

An **OUTSTANDING** participant (A-level) typically:

- Displays genuine enthusiasm and engagement with the texts.
- Plays a leadership role and advances the conversation to new levels.
- Contributes complex insights into the texts and issues.
- Draws connections among the different texts and issues.
- Raises provocative new questions, issues, and ideas.
- Enhances the participation of others by questioning, actively listening, and sharing time.

A **GOOD** participant (B-level) typically:

- Shows interest and effort.
- Actively listens and volunteers.
- Stays on-topic and furthers the conversation.
- Expresses substantial, text-based ideas.
- Asks good questions about the texts and issues.
- Engages other students, not just me.

An **ADEQUATE** participant (C-level) typically:

- Listens but does not volunteer.
- Shows acquaintance with the texts and some signs of preparation if called on.
- Offers opinions on the text, but without specific textual references or other support.

UNACCEPTABLE (failing) behavior includes any of the following:

- No evidence of preparation.
- Dozing off in class. (If you're that sleepy, you should simply go home and take a nap!)
- Other signs of total disengagement: doodling, working for another class, etc.
- "Toxic" or hostile behavior that undermines our intellectual community.

Standards for Exemplary Writing in Encounters

Exemplary analytical writing is clear, smooth, provocative, and compelling. Those are the results of the essay as an effective unity. Even so, as mentioned above, there are different aspects of an essay that can be identified and worked on (somewhat) separately.

Here is a list of the main components of an analytical essay, along with the features of each component that would make it truly exemplary. This is the ideal you should strive to meet, and against which your writing will be evaluated. (The percentages in parentheses are the weightings that will be used in determining your essay grades.)

Insight (20%)

- The essay begins from a careful and accurate understanding of the text(s).
- The essay presents an intellectually demanding analysis that is both controversial and significant in an academic context.
- The scope and framing of the analysis are appropriate for the course and the assignment.
- The different points of the analysis are unified into a single, coherent viewpoint.
- The analysis is fully developed: complexities of the text are acknowledged and addressed, and implications are worked out.

Organization and Structure (30%)

- The overall argument of the essay is divided into clear, logical steps, which match the paragraph divisions.
- The major steps of the argument build in a systematic order, based on the inherent logic of the thesis.
- The introduction prepares readers for the essay's topic and approach, and clearly identifies the thesis.
- There are clear and accurate "signposts" that identify and link the main steps of the argument.
- The discussion within each paragraph flows smoothly and logically.
- The title of the essay is engaging and informative.
- The conclusion brings closure to the analysis and situates it in a broader context.

Evidence and Argument (30%)

- The argument is appropriately thorough and comprehensive.
- The textual evidence presented is specific and directly relevant.
- The impact of all textual evidence is effectively supported through interpretive argument.
- The textual evidence and interpretive argument are strategically chosen, and deployed where and how they're needed.
- Quotations are used when, and only when, they're truly needed. They are well-controlled and smoothly integrated into the discussion.
- Paraphrases are clear, accurate, and focused.

Expression (10%)

- The essay is written in an appropriate academic voice.
- Choices in language and phrasing are correct and precise.
- Sentences and paragraphs show command of language and variation in rhythm and structure.
- The personal voice of the writing enhances the development of the argument and the experience of the reader.

Mechanics (10%)

- The essay fully matches the formatting directions of the assignment.
- The essay conforms to accepted conventions of grammar, punctuation, spelling, and capitalization.
- Quotations, in-text citations, and the list of works cited conform to MLA conventions as described in *Hacker's Pocket Style Manual*.
- The essay is carefully proofread.