

The Close Reading Analysis (CRA) Essay

THE WHAT: For the course's initial essay assignment, you will be asked to select **one character or scene** that will serve as the foundation for a **sustained close reading** that supports your analysis with **evidence from the primary text and at least three outside sources**. The primary goals of this assignment are twofold: first, to provide you guided experience in *close reading*, one of the fundamental activities of scholarly practice in the humanities; and second, to give you an opportunity to deepen your understanding of course content by applying the techniques and terminologies we have been studying to a specific literary text. A secondary goal for the CRA paper is to broaden your knowledge of research methods and techniques by requiring the integration of a small number of scholarly sources.

THE HOW: After reading our first two texts, you should begin thinking about the characters, plot twists, and/or specific scenes that have been the most interesting to you. Working on your own or with help from a classmate or myself, you'll begin to narrow your interests in order to choose one specific character or scene that "excites" you in some way and then submit a one-paragraph explanation for this choice before **THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12**. With the help of academic journals, works of literary criticism and/or biographical studies, and (reliable) Internet sources, you'll highlight the most important aspects of your character or scene and then locate textual evidence to support the claims you'd like to make about these particular aspects.

Remember: You can't go wrong by focusing on **context, characters, plot, and effect**, so look for moments in your selected text where any of these four topics seem ripe for discussion/analysis. I'll be available to meet with you throughout the process, so the sooner you get started, the more help I can be in getting your paper "off the ground."

THE SPECS: Focus = One character or scene from a text we have studied thus far in the course
 Length = 4-6 pages
 Format = MLA Guidelines / 12-pt. font / Double-spaced paragraphs / Works Cited
 Research Requirement = Minimum of three scholarly, reliable sources

THE BEST ESSAYS WILL...

- ✓ Establish a rationale for the focus selected for the paper
- ✓ Develop an original, clear, and well-documented reading of the character/scene selected for analysis
- ✓ Support this reading with at least three scholarly sources
- ✓ Display an understanding of the literary terminology and critical approaches we have been discussing in class this semester
- ✓ Utilize source material throughout the essay to support the author's analysis
- ✓ Include polished, professional prose that, though not necessarily "perfect," demonstrates clearly organized ideas and a commitment to the drafting and revising process

THE WHEN: Due Date for the Paper is **THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10**
 Revision Deadline for the Paper is **TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19**