ENGL 1302 – Michael Duncan
Northwest Campus

Writing to Analyze and Persuade: Literary Analysis

Think of the Literary Analysis as an expanded and focused version of our daily responses. Just like in the responses you will focus on a particular theme or motif in the story. Think about the concepts we are covering week to week (plot, setting, character, point of view, structure). It is your opportunity to show what you have learned and what you believe about your chosen text. For the Literary Analysis, you must have an argument that is logically supported by close-readings of several passages from the text. The argument, or thesis, is your particular interpretation about that specific concept in the story. After you have stated your argument, or thesis, you will spend the rest of the paper developing key points that further elaborate on your thesis and support those points with evidence from the story. You will submit a 5-8 page paper. (Double Spaced, 12 pt. font, 1' margins).

DO NOT SUMMARIZE OR RESTATE THE EVENTS IN THE STORY. Your audience has read the story. Focus on your interpretation of events in the story as evidence of your thesis (or overall argument). Only briefly paraphrase events of the story that are integral to your argument.

Ethos:
Use 6-10 outside sources (not counting the short story you are analyzing) from the research you conducted in your annotated bibliography to support your arguments. These should be scholarly sources, or sources with credible ethos. Introduce all your sources before you use them to support your points as this will also enhance your ethos and protect you from any suspicions of plagiarism. Use direct quotes and paraphrases from the text you are analyzing to support your key points and develop your overall thesis. These supports should make use of all the rhetorical appeals used in persuasive writing and sources are one of your appeals to credibility. Cite sources in MLA format.

Logos:
Good organization as well as logical points and relevant supports are part of logos. Organize your points according to the thesis statement, following the same order of logic you established there. Use transitions to move from one point to the next. Use topic sentences at the beginnings of paragraphs to forecast the key point you will be discussing within said paragraph.

Pathos:
The appeal to emotions is the trickiest of the appeals in some ways. Too much emotional emphasis will undercut a strong argument and make the analysis (and writer) appear weak. Too little emotional appeal will make the analysis cold and uninteresting. Using anecdotes, real life comparisons and carefully chosen wording will bring your thesis and analysis closer to the human element, which is what literature is finally about.

General Structure:
• Introductions should be about 4-8 sentences for a paper of this length. You should not cite outside sources in the introduction (unless it is for anecdotal reasons); instead, you should focus

on establishing the interest of your audience. State your thesis and the points you will make that develop and support that thesis. Usually the thesis statement is at the end of the introduction.
• The paper should then provide the reader with any background or context that is needed to understand your argument and analysis. Background or context may consist of history, psychology, anthropology, sociology, etc. It is important that the background discussion clearly be connected to the thesis you are trying to support.
• The body of the text is the main argument. Here you will lay out your points and develop them. You will support your points through close-reading of your chosen text, i.e. quotes and paraphrases. In text-based analysis, the critic must use the literary texts themselves and cite the passages to be interpreted - showing exactly how and why your interpretations can be supported by the writings in question. You will also support your points through the use of your outside sources, which reaffirm your assertions about the text, or provide the reader with necessary background on the author, the genre, the time period, the critical school, or any other information related to the topics being discussed. Make sure to have topic sentences that state what you will be discussing in that paragraph. Topic sentences are usually individual supporting arguments for your thesis. You then explain and prove those supporting arguments throughout the paragraph.
• Conclusions should be a bit shorter than introductions. Hopefully by now you have established a relationship with your audience so your conclusion provides the opportunity to further that relationship by offering your audience something to consider that is related to, but goes beyond, the thesis of this analysis. What should the audience do or think in response to your analysis? Should they change or adapt their beliefs or actions in some way (keep your audience in mind—scholars)?
• Include a Works Cited page that follow MLA guidelines at the end of the analysis (do not include this in the final page length).

- Create a title for your analysis
- MUST BE WRITTEN ENTIRELY IN 3rd person!!!!