Reading Response Journals included in daily homework 45%

- No Late Journals Accepted; due at the start of class each Tuesday (exceptions noted on calendar).
- **30 points** a week for 750+ typed words, posted to a d2l thread only Cherri can read.
- Some weeks I’ll give you starting places for your writing and sometimes you’ll be free to choose your own. The important part is to write about what you’re reading and thinking—to think through writing.
- Each week I’ll score journals as done if they contain 750+ words related to this class, regardless of the quality.
- Twice during the semester you’ll curate a selection of your best journal writings for Cherri to read and evaluate, labeling them clearly with the date and topics. This document will include 1000-1200 words saved in MLA format and uploaded to d2l dropbox. You will earn up to **100 points** for the content of these selections as evaluated using the rubric posted to the website.

These journals are a place to record your initial responses and your evolving thinking about your reading and learning. The writing you do here will be reflective and expressive as well as speculative and analytical; it will also be informative and full of connections and ideas. You are welcome to build your essays and your final project from material you’ve been working on in your journals. The savvy student will use their journals as a place to discover what they’d like to write about in the Literary Analysis essays.

Each week, you should touch on many/most of the major aspects of the works we’re reading in your journal, like: plot, genre, style, character, theme, and the literary elements. Use the terms, ideas, and theories we encounter to explore literature, to analyze and illuminate texts. Refer directly to the text by noting page numbers, scenes, lines, etc.

Your writing will likely include summative statements and explanations of content, but should not simply summarize the texts you’re reading. Here is the difference. What we don’t need is summary only: "In Alice in Wonderland, Alice gets lost and sits down often to cry." Summary for the purpose of saying something looks like this: “Alice’s response to being lost is really quite contradictory, as she both explores (opens doors, drinks random liquids and talks to strangers) and retracts (sits by herself and cries).” Summary always serves the purpose of our thinking.

If I’ve given you a prompt for the week, start there. Otherwise, write whatever works for you. Use freewriting to generate momentum and don’t sweat the small stuff. If you don’t know where or how to start, use any of the following questions/prompts to get started. Mix it up. Do different questions each week. Do multiple questions in one week. Do none of the questions. Do whatever works for your thinking and learning. The more you use the journals as a place to think about our course content, the more you’re bound to get out of this course.

- What sticks out from the reading? What words, phrases, patterns, symbols, strike you?
- Make connections between the work and the Story and Plot handout. What is the G/M/C?
- What did you have to read more than once? Why?
- Intertextuality. What works is this text is alluding to, or which texts is this work relating to. What works does the text remind you of or what arts does reading it evoke?
- Are they any connections to pop culture to note?
- What is the most important word in the work? Why? The most important passage?
- Do you like the ending? Why? What questions are still unanswered?
- What does this writer’s purpose seem to be?
- My favorite sentence so far is . . . . Or, my favorite scene so far is . . . .
- Create a slogan for the work, or choose a theme song that epitomizes some aspect of the work.
- Question to what extent the influences of the cultural context shaped this literary work? How do the characters, themes, settings, etc. relate to the period in which they were written?
- In the sequel to this work, what should happen?
- Choose a color for this book. Why?
- What archetypes are at work here? Explain.
• Write a letter to the author or to a character about some aspect of the text.
• The climax is when all of the events come to some sort of breaking point. What happens in this climax and how is that the culmination of the conflicts in the text?
• There are multiple kinds of conflict (character v. character, character v. nature, character v. society, character v. self, etc.). Discuss which are at work in this text and how.
• Coming of age is one common theme/conflict in literary works. Another is coming into one’s own, which is where a character accepts who they are and what their role is in society. What’s going on in this work?
• What themes in this work seem timeless/universal? Which are time and place specific?
• Write a feasible solution for a problem has that is different from what happens in the original.
• Sentence starters are a good way to begin a journal entry. You might try:
  o I was surprised that . . .
  o I noticed that . . .
  o I found it hard to believe that . . .
  o This work means . . .
  o I don’t understand . . .
  o The part about __________ reminds me of ______________.
  o My favorite part is when . . .
  o A thing I find confusing is . . .
• What effect does the setting (time, place, social and historical background) have on the character’s thoughts, actions, and choices? What would be your reaction to having to adapt to the character’s environment? Why?
• Explain an idea or theme at work in this piece of writing. What is its importance?
• Can you relate to any of the characters or any of the circumstances depicted in literature? Which ones? What do you relate to in the literature or do you find it difficult to relate it? How? What parts? Write down your reactions to specific images, events, characters, etc.
• On of the most revealing types of conflict occurs when a character’s inner struggle are resolved at great personal price. Often, the character learns a lesson, but too late to help himself or another character. Explain how, in the work, a character struggles but fails to learn a lesson in time, and thus, serves as an example for the reader. Focus on the conflict within the character. Be sure to include the price paid as part of the resolution and the lesson to be learned.
• Discuss the author’s use of figurative language. Identify three examples of figurative language from the novel. Why did the author use these examples? What impact does the figurative language have on the characterization, description of setting, mood, foreshadowing, theme, or the novel overall? In your essay, use a different example in each body paragraph. Be sure to explain the significance of each use of figurative language.
• Consider the gender of the characters in your novel. How are male and female characters portrayed? How does the work portray their roles in society? How does gender influence the choices that are available to the characters and the decisions that they make?
• Discuss how the novel would be different if the genders of the main characters were reversed? Or, discuss how the novel would change if the events were to take place here today.
• Think about the role that social class plays in the work you’ve read? What social classes are represented in the novel? To what extent is each class depicted? Are all the classes given equal representation? How do the classes shown in the novel relate to the classes that realistically existed in the time and places where the novel takes place? As you go through the work, consider two important questions: how does the author feel about the different social classes, and how can you tell the author’s opinion? Explore the way that social class and class issues affect the character and plot of your work?
Reading Journal Evaluation Rubrics

worth up to 100 points each time

Curate excerpts from your journals for Cherri to read per these directions.

1. Create a doc/docx/rtf document and save as "youlastnameJournal1"
2. Reread the directions for the Reading Response Journals to remind yourself of the purpose.
3. Copy and past selections from your previous journals that you think are representative of your best work. You want to choose a diversity of entries totaling 1000-1200 words.
4. Begin each of your entries by providing the date and the topic, so you might have an entry titled “February 15, High Fidelity and Marxism.” Leave a space between each entry.
5. Read the self-evaluation questions below and then add your answers to the beginning of your document. So, you document will have your Self-Evaluation section first and then your Journal second.
6. Select all the text and make the font Times New Roman, 12 point, 1 inch margins, single-space.
7. Spellcheck and then upload to d2l.

Self-Evaluation Questions Curation 1

Before you submit your journal selections for feedback, conduct a self-assessment. Type the answers to these questions at the beginning of your journal entries.

1. Have you used any of the questions / prompts listed in the directions? If yes, which ones?
2. What do you like best about writing the journals? How are they helping you?
3. What do you need to improve in future journals?
4. Anything else you want Cherri to know.

Rubric for Scoring

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Sucky</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Pretty Good</th>
<th>Awesome</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discuss the content of the texts.</td>
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<td>Quote/note specific passages.</td>
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<td>Use literary/technical vocabulary.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analyze/speculate/make connections.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engage literary theory.</td>
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Cherri’s comments and recommendations.

Self-Evaluation Questions for Curation 2

Before you submit your journal selections for feedback, conduct a self-assessment. Type the answers to these questions at the beginning of your journal entries.

1. What did you work on since the last curation?
2. How has your relationship with the journal changed over time?
3. What has been the overall benefit of this process?
4. Do you have any advice for future students about the journals?
5. Anything else you want Cherri to know.
Literary Analysis Essays 2 Essays = 30% of grade each 1500+ words

What's Literary Analysis?

Simply put, a literary analysis is an essay in which a literary text (or an aspect of a text) is analyzed. (Duh!) Literary analysis requires writers to develop (and argue) a particular and specific interpretation of a specified text (or genre, scene or theme, etc.). This interpretation is an original idea or way of understanding the text that is specific to you—the reader of the text and writer of the essay. Literary analysis considers what a text does and how it does it; in general, academic readers and writers are not interested in what a text means.

Your goal as a writer of a literary analysis is to convince your reader—your peers and your teacher—that your well-supported argument is a reasonable interpretation. Each essay you write will have a clear focus—thesis statement—and support that thesis by breaking your evidence into chunks and explaining it. That's what analysis is.

For this course, you will write two literary analysis essays, both of which you will peer workshop and revise. The due dates for drafts and revisions are on the calendar. You will write:

1. One essay focused on High Fidelity (15% of grade) due the week after we finish the book
2. One essay on a work (or works) of your choice that we read this semester (15% of grade) due 3 weeks before the end of the semester.

- At least one of the essays listed above must engage a theoretical lens.
- At least one of the essays listed above must include secondary sources with corresponding MLA citation and Works Cited. Using Critical Theory does not count as a secondary source.
- You can use theory and sources in both of them if you want, but that's not necessary.
- Failing to complete one of the essays will result in failing the course.

Requirements. Each essay should:

- Be typed, MLA formatted and sourced, and 1500+ words submitted to d2l dropbox.
- Will be worked through the writing process: draft, feedback, revision.
- Develop a clear thesis and control it through focused analysis and textual support. A thesis is arguable and supportable. Arguable in an academic sense means that reasonable, educated people might have differing opinions about the subject. See cherriporter.com/thesis.html for more help and links to sample thesis statements.
- Engage the subject matter of the course: the literary terms and concepts we’ve been working with since week one are your friends. Use them.
- All of the words in this essay should be your own, or should be short, quoted passages from the sources, cited in MLA. No essay should incorporate more than 15% quoted text. The smallest piece of quoted text to get your message across is the best; avoid quoting huge chunks.
- Very little plot summary is necessary in a literary analysis. Keep summaries brief and make sure they serve the purpose of your analysis.
- No quoting from sites like Sparknotes—or Wikis or Abouts or wherever you get your version simplistic drek. I go to Sparknotes sometimes, to clarify a scene or find background information, but I don’t quote from it in my writing as it is not an academic source.) What you personally have to say is always more interesting than what Sparknotes has to say. The only exception is if your thesis is something like: why Sparknotes has it wrong about X and why Y is true interpretation. Same goes with film adaptions.

Kind of Sources Used in Literary Analysis

Many literature analysis essays use only text from the primary source (or original work of literature) in the analysis. So, if the essay is about High Fidelity, the only text quoted and referred to is High Fidelity.

Another kind of literary analysis incorporates secondary sources. Secondary sources are about the primary text. For instance, one might find an article written about how Nick Hornby’s characters tap into Gen X psychology (like “Nick Hornby and the Plight of Gen X” by Michael Berkowitz) and use that to support one’s arguments about High Fidelity. These kinds of sources usually are found in peer edited (academic/scholarly) journals or periodicals that regularly do cultural
criticism (*Salon, The Toast, The Atlantic*, etc), and are available online or via the campus library’s databases. Reference librarians love to help you ferret out sources for interesting topics so use them. They are available online and in person. www.arc.losrios.edu/arclibrary/Get_Help.htm

Another kind of secondary source is a source not specifically about the text in question, but maybe related to the subject matter. An article about record collectors might be used as supporting evidence to illuminate a particular point about the book *High Fidelity*. If you’re arguing that Rob is mentally ill, you might quote from a medical text. A comparative analysis between the film adaptation of a text and the source has the film as a secondary source and the text as the primary. You can also refer to texts referred to in the book. For instance, Barbara Kingsolver’s novel, *Prodigal Summer*, references Charles Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species*, which might be an interesting source to use in support of your interpretation. Quoting from theory to use it in your analysis is not generally necessary, but sometimes theory might also qualify as this kind of secondary text.

**Close Reading**

All literary analysis requires close reading, though what exactly you’re close reading for depends on your topic. You might chose a symbol/idea/image from a text and develop your essay by illuminating for the reader how that element works. Examples of this are discussing how the hurricane imagery works in “Every Little Hurricane” or noting the role of reading and books in “Iris Doesn’t Walk.” You could also look at point of view, plot, setting, characters, etc.—any elements of literature you can break into pieces and examine in close detail, like how does the writer interpret the veracity of the first-person narrator in *HF*? The only real parameters for choosing a topic is that you need to be able to support your ideas—whatever they are—with evidence and quoting from the primary texts you choose to analyze.

You can also view any literary text through a theoretical lens. Some lenses will be more productive tools for some texts than others. Sherman Alexie’s *The Absolutely True Diary of A Part-Time Indian* is a coming-of-age story about an impoverished underdog, and Psychoanalysis, Marxism, and Post-Colonial theory are going to give you the most bang for your buck. Although you could also do a Feminist analysis of this text, it wouldn’t be as lucrative for you as the others in gleaning content for your essay.

**So, what exactly are you doing again?**

The primary challenge in an essay of this size is focus: less is usually more. In a short essay I can’t tell you everything I think about *Pride and Prejudice*—that would take hundreds of pages. However, in a few pages I can talk about how Elizabeth’s first impressions of Darcy and Wickham are formed immediately and strongly, but also note how these impression change over the course of the book. To do so, I would give examples from the book of her first impressions. I would quote exact text and explain how and why these impressions are formed, why they are accurate or inaccurate, and what makes her change her mind. So, I explain how I think and understand this one element of the book—as the way I understand it is different than the way other readers understand it.

Notice that for this topic, I narrow the focus to Elizabeth’s first impressions of two characters. Elizabeth, as well as many other characters in the novel, have other accurate or inaccurate first impressions, but as a writer, I know I can’t cover them all in a short essay. So, I narrow my topic down to one aspect of the book. Keep in mind that this topic does not tell the reader everything there is to know about the book, nor does it tell about every character or every important event. It doesn’t even tell the reader everything there is to know about Elizabeth. You are not writing a summary of the book nor are you writing a book report. Rather you are writing about how you understand or interpret this one specific slice of the book, which is a narrow and sophisticated task.

This example topic focuses in on one slice of something—Elizabeth’s experience of first impressions with only two other characters. The scope is small so the writer can manage their own ideas for a short length of time and space. I might recommend if a student picked this topic that they put their focus on Elizabeth’s impression of only one character, not both, just to narrow it down that much more. (Your rough drafts might be long and meandering, though. We often don’t decide what to narrow in on until we’ve discovered a variety of things to say and have seen what we have the most to say about, and we do this through the drafting process.)
The definition of guru we’re working with is: a person with knowledge or expertise; an intellectual leader. So, for this task, you and some peers will be our gurus for one class of the semester, during which you lead us intellectually on the assigned readings/topics.

- This is a collaborative assignment in which a group of students adds to our classroom experience of the assigned texts and ideas. Gurus might: generate productive discussion, provide background and connecting details, engage the class in a relevant activity, or something else that enhances our learning, for 20-25 minutes.
- You will be evaluated according to the rubric for this assignment posted on the website.
- All students will write and post to the d2l dropbox a self-evaluation within 24 hours AFTER their groups present. It’s confidential. These self-evals should explain how you feel your guru group did, how well you worked together, what you saw and your strengths and weakness, etc. Self-evals should be thoughtful, contain details, and be approximately 200 words or more. I will NOT assign your grade until I receive a self-eval from you. If you do not turn in a self-eval, 10 percent will be deducted from your final guru grade.
- All students will evaluate each guru group; these are worth 10 points each.
- Guru groups may want to meet in person, though could also collaborate successfully online using Google drive or a d2l discussion board dedicated to your project. If you need handouts copied by me, email them to me as pdfs at least one week in advance of your presentation.
- I’m happy to meet with your group, but do bring some ideas to the table when we talk and do not expect me to spoon feed you.

Here are the Guru topics, listed in the order we encounter them during the semester.

1. Focus on short stories (tba) with focus on literary terminology, close reading, and figurative language.
2. Applying Psychoanalytic theory to High Fidelity.
3. Applying Feminist theory to High Fidelity.
4. Poetry: guru’s choice (anything form the packet; any focus).
5. Focus on graphic storytelling in general; go beyond Scott Pilgrim to other graphic novels or comics.
6. Focus on “Brokeback Mountain” by Annie Proulx, either natural world/imagery OR applying Marxism theory and/or Queer theory to it.
7. Focus on short stories (tba) applying African American and/or Post Colonial theories.
8. Focus on scholarly criticism and interpretations of Shakespeare’s Taming of the Shrew.

Complete one form per Guru Group

Who are the people who want to be in this group? Groups should have four people. Cherri gets final say.

1. ___________________________ 3. ___________________________
2. ___________________________ 4. ___________________________

What aspect of this project is most important to your group? Circle one.

  a. work w/ these people exactly  b. get the topic you want

List your first and second choice options. If you’re feeling unlucky, mark a third as well.

1. 
2. 
3. 