ESSAY 2: GUIDELINES

EPIC ENGLISH 1102
Essay 2: Critique
Assignment Guidelines
Length: 3 pages minimum (1000-1200 words)

Purpose:

To demonstrate the ability to critically summarize the similarities and differences among multiple texts, and to assess the value of 1-2 texts relative to one another. Specifically, the critique paper asks a writer to make an informed value judgment in which s/he deems the chosen text(s) more or less effective than the other with reference to qualities such as argumentative and authorial choices (i.e., rhetorical, compositional, and stylistic choices), as well as to principles of information literacy (e.g., authoritativeness, contextual value, and bias).

Goals:
- The writer will demonstrate aptitude at critically summarizing the similarities and differences among multiple texts, especially with respect to their arguments, authorial choices (i.e., rhetorical, compositional, and stylistic choices), authoritativeness, and contextual value, in a clear, concise, and accurate manner.
- The writer will demonstrate aptitude at assessing multiple texts against one another with reference to argumentative and authorial choices (i.e., rhetorical, compositional, and stylistic choices), as well as to principles of information literacy (e.g., authoritativeness, contextual value, and bias), culminating in a thesis statement and overall argument that elaborates on the significance of these characteristics in one to two texts.
- The writer will demonstrate an understanding of grammatical and stylistic conventions in writing through use of standard grammar, varied syntax, context-appropriate tone, and otherwise readable prose.
- The writer will demonstrate an understanding of the organizational conventions that characterize academic writing through the inclusion of identifiable introduction and conclusion paragraphs, as well as content paragraphs containing clear claims, evidence, and explanation/analysis.
- The writer will demonstrate an awareness of manuscript, citation, and documentation conventions in academic and professional writing through accurate adherence to MLA style guidelines.

ESSAY 2: Critique

Essay 2: Critique
Length: 3 pages minimum (1000-1200 words)

Purpose:

This assignment is a chance to practice two skills of value well outside this composition classroom:

(1) summarizing and appreciating similarities and differences between texts that address, or seem to address, similar subjects while they support various arguments, make various rhetorical and compositional choices, and possess various levels of authority and bias in doing so

(2) assessing which text is most and/or least valuable relative to the other with reference to those various qualities.

You will critically summarize both *Into the Wild* and *Return to the Wild,* giving particular attention to the qualities differentiating them, before articulating and supporting an argumentative thesis statement in which you assert one of them more or less effective than the other.

Task:

Using the two major texts we've examined this semester, *Into the Wild* and *Return to the Wild,* compose

(1) an introduction that summarizes the similarities and differences between them and ends with a unique thesis statement deeming at least one text more and/or less effective relative to the other

(2) content paragraphs that illustrate and support the argument made in the thesis statement

(3) a conclusion that recontextualizes the assessed text(s) with the others, explaining how the various qualities considered throughout the paper make it/them more and/or less effective overall.

Criteria for Success
1. **Introduction:** The introduction should achieve three objectives:

   (1) it should introduce the texts, including both authors and titles
   (2) it should critically summarize both what each text says and how each text says it in a clear, concise, and accurate manner, giving particular attention to the qualities that differentiate the two
   (3) it should conclude with an argumentative thesis statement that assesses the value of one text as a film adaptation of a nonfiction biography and the other as a documentary in response to that story; consider their relation to each other with reference to their

arguments, authorial choices (i.e., rhetorical, compositional, and stylistic choices), authoritativeness, and contextual value, among other qualities.

2. **Thesis Statement:** Your thesis should present a clear and concise argumentative statement that assesses the value of a source text relative to the other one discussed in the introduction, and based on its arguments, authorial choices (i.e., rhetorical, compositional, and stylistic choices), authoritativeness, and contextual value. **Remember, your thesis should not be presented as a response to the text's main points (e.g., agreeing or disagreeing with the text's ideas) but should make a value judgement about the text (e.g., why the text is effective or persuasive)**. *Note: You can assess two source texts, specifically comparing and contrasting them, if you choose.

3. **Supporting Argument/Body:** Each content paragraph should likewise include three components:

(1) a topic sentence claim
(2) evidence for that claim
(3) analysis the explains HOW and WHY the evidence deepens, compicates or proves your claim for the paragraph

Each topic sentence should make an argumentative claim that further specifies the assessment of the source text(s) articulated in the thesis statement, and as such should evaluate a particular rhetorical, compositional, organizational, stylistic, logical, (etc.), choice made in that text. Evidence, meanwhile, will take the form of quotations or of paraphrases, from the source text, that support and/or illustrate the claim made in the topic sentence, and the analysis will explain how each piece of evidence supports, illustrates, and otherwise "proves" the argued evaluation.

4. **Conclusion:** The conclusion, in general, has just a few objectives: (1) it should restate the thesis statement *in other words*, (2) it should place the assessed text(s) in dialogue with those summarized in the introduction, explaining how the various qualities considered throughout the paper make it/them more and/or less effective overall; and (3) it should gesture at the value of the critiqued text(s) in larger social and/or cultural contexts given the assessment argued in the overall paper.

5. **MLA Format:** The paper should follow current MLA style guidelines. Be sure to include in-text citations for direct quotations and paraphrases from your source as well as a Works Cited page. NOTE: The Purdue OWL website is an excellent resource for MLA guidelines, including formatting in-text citations and your Works Cited page.

Goals:
- The writer will demonstrate aptitude at critically summarizing the similarities and differences among multiple texts, especially with respect to their arguments, authorial choices (i.e., rhetorical, compositional, and stylistic choices), authoritativeness, and contextual value, in a clear, concise, and accurate manner.
- The writer will demonstrate aptitude at assessing multiple texts against one another with reference to argumentative and authorial choices (i.e., rhetorical, compositional, and stylistic choices), as well as to principles of information literacy (e.g., authoritativeness,

contextual value, and bias), culminating in a thesis statement and overall argument that elaborates on the significance of these characteristics in one to two texts.

- The writer will demonstrate an understanding of grammatical and stylistic conventions in writing through use of standard grammar, varied syntax, context-appropriate tone, and otherwise readable prose.
- The writer will demonstrate an understanding of the organizational conventions that characterize academic writing through the inclusion of identifiable introduction and conclusion paragraphs, as well as content paragraphs containing clear claims, evidence, and explanation/analysis.
- The writer will demonstrate an awareness of manuscript, citation, and documentation conventions in academic and professional writing through accurate adherence to MLA style guidelines.