

## Contemporary American Fiction: Essay #1 (25%), Instructions

Both of your essays this semester will be scaffolded assignments. This means that they will be made up of four different stages.

### Stage 1: Brainstorming (2.5%), Feb. 19 in-class

Last class, you were given a sheet detailing what is expected of you for your brainstorm. For homework, you were asked to produce step one through four for at least one theme/motif in the novel.

As stated last class, you will come up with your own topics for your essays. The point of stage one is to allow you to think of ideas that will lead you to your topic.

**In order to earn full points for this stage, your brainstorm must contain the following elements.** If you already did this for homework, you can hand in what you did for homework. If some part of what you did for homework does not meet these criteria, redo your brainstorm now. **Step 4 is a new step, so even if you keep what you did for homework, you'll have to do that now:**

- ✓ **Step one:** List the theme(s)/motif(s) you will be brainstorming on.
- ✓ **Step two:** A brainstorm that is at least half a page, typed, single spaced. (You may have done this handwritten for homework. As long as it's the equivalent of around a half-page typed, this is fine). *OR* a detailed mind-map.
- ✓ **Step three:** A reference list of at least 10 citations from the novel. You can just list the page number, where on the page the quote is, the first few lines (page 90, middle, "I never knew...").
- ✓ **Step four:** 5 different, one-line working theses. These should all be based on the same theme/motif. These must be full sentences. What you are trying to find is a specific argument about the novel that you are trying to prove in your essay. **Underline the one you think is best.**
- ✓ **Step five (new step):** Group the citations together into between 3 and 5 groups. **Basically, you are looking for citations that would work together in a paragraph. For each group, write a one-sentence analytical statement about what you might say in this paragraph.**

**Themes / Motifs we've considered** (There is a lot of overlap between these. Your thesis can combine two or more of these, if that makes sense to you):

Lenny's character; Eunice's character; Lenny and Eunice's love story; The importance or insignificance of love in times of political crisis; the power or lack of power of one person to change the world; the experience of first-generation immigrants in America; the reversal of the parent/child dynamic; the melding of man and machine; the influence of technology on humanity; loss of human contact in an increasingly technological world; the growing illiteracy of society; the novel as a satire of modern-day America; the oversexualization of society; worship of youth culture; the different points of view in the novel; the different genres of writing in the novel

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### Stage 2: First draft (5%), Feb 19 & 21 in-class

**In this stage, you will produce a first draft of your essay.** First drafts are usually messy and experimental. The purpose of this draft is to get your ideas on paper, and to figure out what your essay is actually about. Don't worry too much about organization or the quality of your writing. I will not be marking grammar, spelling, etc. for this draft. **Focus on your ideas and the quality of your analysis.** Remember the lessons for integrating and analyzing citations that we talked at length about in class.

You can write an introduction and conclusion, but they will not be graded for this draft.

What you need to produce:

- ✓ At the top of your draft, write your one-sentence working thesis. This must be a full sentence.
- ✓ Next, write a complete 1,000-word draft. Your draft should have:
- ✓ 3-6 body paragraphs
- ✓ Each body paragraph must contain at least two citations. They can contain more than two citations, but they shouldn't contain less.
- ✓ Your citations must be properly integrated (a sentence before the quote introducing and contextualizing them).
- ✓ You should try and dig as deeply as possible in your analysis. I encourage you to use the templates I've provided:
  - "This \_\_\_\_\_ is important because..."
  - "The fact that \_\_\_\_\_ shows us that..."
  - "The word \_\_\_\_\_ suggests that..."
  - "\_\_\_\_\_ tells us a lot about..."
  - "We learn a lot about \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_..."
  - "\_\_\_\_\_ gives us important information about the setting/Lenny's character/the author's tone, etc..."
- ✓ Remember the guidelines for quotation clusters we discussed in class.

At the end of the second day, you will print out your draft and hand it in.

Your draft must be double spaced, and written in 12-point Times New Roman font. On the first page, in the upper left hand corner, please write your name, the course number and name, my name, and the date. The page number and your last name should appear in the upper right hand corner of each page.

**On your desk (or your computer) you may have:** your novel, class handouts, class presentations, a dictionary, a thesaurus, your class notes, and your previous assignments. You may not share any materials.

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### How you will be graded for your first draft:

<b>Working thesis statement</b>	<b>1</b>
<i>Working thesis statement is a full sentence that makes an interesting, analytical statement</i>	
<b>Length</b>	<b>1</b>
<i>Draft is long enough (4 pages, or 1,000 words. Quotations do not count in word count)</i>	
<b>Choice of citations</b>	<b>1</b>
<i>Draft contains at least 8 citations that are insightful and varied (from different parts of the novel)</i>	
<b>Handling of citations</b>	<b>1</b>
<i>Citations are properly integrated &amp; contextualized</i>	
<b>Ideas</b>	<b>1</b>
<i>Draft contains significant analysis (by using any of the techniques discussed in class)</i>	
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<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>

### Stage 3: Lab Revision, (2.5%), March 5

We will spend one session in the lab completing specific revision and rewriting exercises. You will receive detailed instructions on these on the day we are in the lab. You will also need to do significant revisions at home.

Be sure to bring in both a digital copy and a hard copy of your latest draft to this session.

### Stage 4: Final Draft, (15%), Due March 7

For your final draft, you will produce a polished, complete, 4 page (1000-word) version of your paper. You will have had significant time to revise and rewrite your paper, so I expect these to be of very high quality.

Your draft must be typed, double spaced, and written in 12-point Times New Roman font. On the first page, in the upper left hand corner, please write your name, the course number and name, my name, and the date. The page number and your last name should appear in the upper right hand corner of each page.

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How you will be graded for your final draft:

### Ideas 5

- Thesis statement is a full sentence that makes an interesting, analytical statement
- Each argument helps push thesis statement forward
- Arguments are organized logically and effectively
- Arguments display strong understanding of novel
- Arguments display significant analysis (not summary) by
  - discussing literary elements,
  - making astute connections between different elements in the novel
  - Analyzing specific words, phrases, and images
  - Doing close reading of scenes
  - Explaining how specific scenes relate to novel as a whole
  - Provide in-depth discussion of how themes/motifs help us gain new perspective on novel
- Citations are insightful and varied (from different parts of the novel)

### Structure 5

- Citations are properly integrated (introduced and contextualized)
- Punctuation before and after citations is correct
- Proper use of MLA parenthetical citation
- Introduction and conclusion contain necessary elements
- Text formatted according to MLA format
- Works Cited in proper MLA format

### Expression 5

- Clear, understandable, error-free sentences
- Has been carefully proofread for typographical errors, including
  - Sentence structure (no comma splices or fragments), words and diction, grammar, spelling, word choice, apostrophe usage, pronoun reference, verb conjugation, subject/verb agreement, article usage, capital letters, plural usage, parallelism

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**Total 15**