

## Core 168: LITERARY ANALYSIS MICRO ESSAY

Your second essay for the course will be a literary analysis essay. This time, however, you are writing a MICRO ESSAY—a much shorter, more condensed version of what you did for your first essay. This time, in addition to analyzing a literary device, pay attention to the genre of the text and how this form (genre) supports the content. For instance, the narrative form of Beth Brant's "Swimming Upstream" helps us follow Anna Mae's thoughts and feelings as she progresses through her journey.

You will choose one primary text (one of the poems, stories, speeches, or memoirs) from our class reading (**between week 8 and the end of the semester**) and then focus your essay on analyzing the text by identifying ONE literary technique or device notable in the text. The length of this essay is **one well-developed paragraph**. Because this essay is shorter and more tightly constructed, the challenge is to include meaningful content with a sophisticated style that supports the essay. While the essay is concise, it is also complex in thought and style.

Since the essay is brief, follow this guideline, using MLA essay format:

1. start with a title identifying the text;
2. begin the essay with your meaningful, worthwhile thesis sentence;
3. follow the thesis with examples that support the thesis. You may include quotes within your examples;
4. conclude the essay, providing closure. (No Works Cited list is needed since only the primary text will be used).

We will work on the essay in class, beginning with identifying a text and thesis.

You will follow these steps of the writing process to write your essay. Each step will also earn you assignment credit. Your assignments will provide guidance for how to approach and perform a literary analysis. Also, included below are specific directions for HOW TO WRITE A LITERARY ANALYSIS ESSAY:

1. Read "How to Write a Literary Analysis Essay" (below in this document);
2. Choose a primary text of literature as your focus for the essay;
3. Brainstorm regarding two different aspect of the text—the content (**WHAT THE TEXT SAYS**) and the literary devices (**HOW THE TEXT SAYS WHAT IT SAYS**). If you would like to use a recommended topic, you may do so, but you are also free to explore your own topic
4. Determine **WHAT** is interesting and important about what happens in the text and make a statement about it. That statement is your thesis statement.
5. Write an essay to support your thesis statement, using textual evidence (quotes from the primary text) to illustrate and provide examples of your thesis.
6. Revise your essay for content and organization.
7. Edit your essay for clarity and correctness.
8. Visit the Writing Center and do a peer review of your essay.
9. Proofread your essay before submitting it.
10. Submit your essay by the deadline.

### **SUGGESTED TOPICS**

- Choose a symbol to analyze in the short story "Swimming Upstream"
- Analyze how the legend of deer woman operates within Paula Gunn Allen's short story "Deer Woman"
- Analyze irony in Louise Erdrich's chapter "Sainte Marie"
- Analyze the significance of the hoop in Paula Gunn Allen's poem
- Analyze a theme or literary device in Sherman Alexie's novel *Flight*
- Analyze an element of the film *Smoke Signals*

*You may also create a topic of your own. You are NOT limited to these suggestions.*