

Critical Essay Assignment

Synopsis: For this assignment, you will select a mass mediated text (i.e., film, television show, advertisement, video game, song, literary work, magazine, newspaper, internet site, etc.), research it, and write a 4-page critical analysis of the text that utilizes *one* of the following 12 theoretical perspectives explored in class (i.e., Marxist, organizational, pragmatic, rhetorical, cultural, psychoanalytic, feminist, queer, reception, sociological, erotic, or ecological).

Content: At a minimum your paper should include:

1. Your name and paper title at the top of the first page of the essay. Please do NOT include a separate cover page.
2. A one paragraph introduction in which you:
 - a) Introduce your media text,
 - b) comment upon its significance as an object of study,
 - c) formulate a clear and concise thesis statement (i.e., identify *what* your text is doing and *how* it is doing it), and
 - d) preview your argument/paper.
3. An analysis of your text using relevant principles discussed in class. The goal of this section is to effectively combine theory and astute critical observations. This is the body of your paper and should constitute the largest portion.
4. A critical conclusion in which you briefly reflect on the implications of your analysis. This might include speculating about the role your text plays in political affairs, processes of socialization, or U.S. culture generally.

Form: The paper must be typed, double-spaced, and in a 12-point font with one inch margins. Please follow the style guidelines of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.). The essay should be stapled in the upper left-hand corner and should not exceed 4 pages of text (i.e., excluding the references page). Because this is such a short essay, you do not need a separate cover page or abstract even though APA calls for these elements. The page limit is not designed to constrict your insightful writing. So, be clear and concise.

Grading Rubric: The critical essay is worth 1/5 of your final course grade (100 points). It will be assessed on its: organizational clarity (20 pts); construction of argument (20 pts); use of theoretical principles discussed in class (20 pts); depth of analysis (20 pts), and proper grammar and rhetorical artistry (20 pts). Failure to adhere strictly to the format requirements will result in grade deductions on this assignment.

Due Date: The critical essay will be submitted to your recitation leader in class on Tuesday, December 03. Papers will NOT be accepted electronically. Since this paper is being assigned a full 15 weeks in advance of the deadline, do not request an extension. Plan ahead! NO extensions will be granted.

Critical Essay Grading Rubric

Organizational Clarity – 20 points

Introduction (identifies object of study, preview statement)

Transitions (motivated)

Arrangement (well structured, easy to follow)

Construction of Argument – 20 points

Thesis statement (identifies *what* the text is doing and *how* it is doing it)

Evidence/support

Use of Theoretical Principles – 20 points

Defines concepts

Explains concepts

Depth of Analysis – 20 points

Critical insight

Concrete examples

Rhetorical Artistry – 20 points

Style (APA)

Grammar and language usage

Form (typed, stapled, 4 pages, 12-point font)