

**Writing Option One: Short Papers (each 10% of your final grade)**

**Due: Mondays by 5PM**

*Mechanics: 3-4 pages, double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, 1" (not 1 ½") margins, MLA In-text Citation and Works Cited format.*

These short papers are application papers in which your **specific claim** stems from how you *apply* a concept from the last week's readings to a (brief) close reading of a cultural text or vice versa. To do so, you need to **isolate a critical concept** from one of our readings and explicate it using close readings of **quotes**, discuss its **implications**, and finally apply that concept to an understanding of **another text**. You may use some or all of your weekly presentations as part of this paper.

These papers should include an **introduction** followed by the sections below, which may vary in length depending on what parts interest you the most. For instance, you may be interested in really exploring the idea(s) you've chosen from our critical texts, so your application of those ideas on a cultural text might be shorter. Or, vice versa, you may want to explore a particular cultural text using the ideas from class and so your discussion of the last requirement will be longer.

1. **Explication** In this part you isolate one (or *maybe* two) ideas from one of our readings, either critical or literary. You might use more than one essay from our class but you need to focus on one idea from one essay, perhaps using another essay to discuss that idea. Then explicate, meaning analyze in order to reveal the meaning of, one quote. To do this use the Quote Sandwich format from the Using Quotations Handout to close read the quote and really unpack *in some depth* the concept from the essay, defining terms and phrases, discussing possible/probable meanings, and connecting your reading to the main concept you are discussing and your claim. You may use any of our critical readings
2. **Implication** In this section, discuss the stakes or implications of the concept on which you have focused. By this I mean that you need to be able to verbalize reasons this particular concept would be useful, for example, to understand something about the intersections of race/gender/sexuality in America or to understand the way stereotypes work or to understand the way a particular cultural text represents a particular social type/category. This section is really meant to take your explication and understanding of the concept one step further and brainstorm why this essay would be important for anyone to read.
3. **Application** In the final section, you need to apply the concept to a reading of a literary/cultural text in our class. By this I mean, you've said what it means and why it's important, now show me how to use the concept to understand the way sex functions in one of our cultural texts. You might use the concept to unpack a social text like a particular stereotype or social definition/category as it is represented in a text. You might use the concept to explore the particular ways that a cultural text represents a racial stereotype or subjectivity or social issue or historical event or news story or anything about American racial, gender, and/or sexual formation. To do so, you might use the cultural or social text to provide an *example* of your critical concept or to *further explicate* your concept or to *critique* your concept (perhaps you see an interesting debate between a critical and a cultural text) or you might *connect* your critical and cultural text in any way to engage our class keywords.

These papers are deceptively difficult and it takes time to do them well, so give yourself ample time to think (use our class discussion to do so) and some time to write so you can craft a specific claim, a strong discussion of the implications and a careful, in-depth close reading of your cultural/social text within the short page length requirement.

## Writing Guidelines for Excellent Papers

1. *Every* paper must introduce **one critical concept from one text** by briefly synthesizing the main claims of the critical essay
2. *Every* paper explicate and analyze one specific concept using one or more **quotes**.
3. *Every* paper must introduce their **cultural text**.
4. *Every* paper must include **close readings** of a cultural text *using* your critical concept.
5. *Every* paper must have a clear **organization** that introduces and **connects** all your points/evidence/readings to each other and to your main claim.
6. *Every* paper should have **transitions** that make connections between points and paragraphs.
7. *Every* paper must have an **introduction** that *clearly* states your claim and a brief **conclusion** that does more than reiterate your argument.
8. *Every* paper must include a **Works Cited list and In-Text Citations** of all textual evidence.