

### **Instructions for the Analytical Essay**

From the syllabus:

#### **ANALYTICAL ESSAY (Ch. 8)—100 Points**

- The assignment should be 1300-1800 words, or longer; anything less than 1200 words and I won't grade it.
- Pay attention to the Learning Objectives, page 259; the Features of the Form, page 264; and the assignment itself, Inquiry Project: Writing an Analytical Essay, page 280 (ignore the Prose+ section; we won't be using it this semester).
- Any research or outside materials consulted in writing this must be documented according to conventional academic standards (APA or MLA, sometimes CMS).

Advice:

Follow Ballenger's Instructions:

- Write on something that is open to interpretation. These can be cultural trends, marketing campaigns, fashion trends, individual works from music, books, TV/Film, advertisements, but also social/cultural issues, arguments, and positions. Anything that can be interpreted by different people to mean different things is fair game.
- Describe the object you're writing about and identify the patterns, elements, passages, references, or features that strike you as interesting.
- Examine how these elements connect to larger themes, ideas, etc.
- Argue for a particular interpretation, a particular answer to the question: What might this mean?

Also:

- Understand the difference between text and subtext. Text is what's on the surface and explicitly stated/shown; subtext is what's beneath the surface and what's implied by looking more deeply at the text. Text should be obvious, but subtext is where what you're writing about is open to interpretation.
- Put some time into understanding your audience. How much do you need to describe or summarize? How much are they likely to know already. It's tricky to figure this out. Too much background or description and you risk confusing your readers or worse, sounding like you're talking down to them. Too little and they can feel lost and adrift, uncertain what you're trying to get across or how you have come to your conclusions.

From the syllabus:

Remember when submitting your writing assignments:

- All papers must be **DOUBLE-SPACED**, use normal margins (usually 1 inch or 1 1/4 inches on each side), and be formatted in Times New Roman 12 pt font (no Courier or sans serif fonts), have paragraph indentions and no additional spacing between paragraphs, include page numbers, an appropriate first page header, and a title for the assignment, centered on the first page (for a visual representation of what a college-level writing assignment should look like, see the [OWL at Purdue](#) website).
  - Paragraphs should make use of tabbed or automatic first-line indentions (1/2 inch); spacing is not acceptable.
  - Paragraphs should have no additional spacing between them (set before/after spacing in paragraph format to 0pt).
- I reserve the right to assess penalties for papers that aren't formatted properly, up to and including refusal of a grade (resulting in a zero).

**WARNING:** Any outside research, whether primary or secondary, used in your writing assignments **MUST** be properly cited and documented according to conventional academic standards. You should study and be familiar with the material Ballenger provides in Ch. 11: Research Techniques, and Ch. 12: Using and Citing Sources to assist you in doing this. You may also feel free to consult online sources, such as OWL at Purdue, for more information on proper APA/MLA documentation.