

ENG 2001 (530)– Paper #1: Close Reading the Elements in American Short Fiction

Basic Information:

9/14: Paper assigned today

9/28: Last day to show me optional drafts of the paper.

10/3: Paper due by **4 pm** on OpenLab. Points will be deducted for careless formatting or submitting to the wrong dropbox. 20 points will be deducted for each day an essay is late. After 3 days, assignment will be recorded as a “zero.”

10/5: Hard copy of paper, **identical to electronic copy**, due at beginning of class.

Motivating Question:

Focusing on **one passage** from **one** of the following stories, and **two elements from the following list**, write a **700-800 word paper** in which you...

a) analyze the author’s use of **one Element** in that passage,

b) “zoom out,” and explain how your analysis helps the reader understand **some other Element of the story better**.

Washington Irving, “Rip Van Winkle”

Nathaniel Hawthorne, “Young Goodman Brown”

Stephen Crane, “The Bride Comes To Yellow Sky”

Kate Chopin, “The Story Of An Hour”

Elements: Plot, Point of View, Style, Character, Setting

Sample prompts:

-Pick one passage from “Rip Van Winkle” that focuses on the story’s **setting**. How does that passage help readers understand the story’s **plot**? (hint: this prompt requires you to think about plot as not only *what happens* in a story, but *why* those events happen.)

-Using the last few paragraphs of “Young Goodman Brown,” analyze the **point of view** from which the story is told. What is the narrator’s attitude towards (old) Goodman, and how does that information help us better understand the way that the characters are presented to us? (e.g., why might this **narrator** depict Goodman, or Faith, or the Guide in the Woods, the way that he does?)

-Focus on one passage from “The Bride Comes To Yellow Sky” that illustrates Stephen Crane’s **style**. Then, explain how Crane’s *style* affects the reader’s experience of the story’s **setting**.

-Focus on one passage from “The Story Of An Hour” that illustrates the main **character’s** personality. Then, explain how your analysis helps the reader understand the story’s **plot**.

You’re welcome to come up with your own combination of passage, story, and Elements, but if you’re stuck for ideas, I recommend using one of the above three prompts.

Your essay will be graded in terms of **Three** major areas:

1. Content.

- directly address** the prompt
- assert a **clear argument (thesis)** early, and then work logically to **develop and support** that argument
- use at least 3 **quotations**.
- show fluency in the **elements of fiction**, recognizing that they are not interchangeable (i.e., “plot,” “character” and “setting” all mean different things!)
- build on classroom discussion, particularly **discussions about what defines “American” literature**

2. Organization.

- closely follow the 3-part structure of **introducing the thesis, close reading, and then explaining how that passage sheds light on the story as a whole**
- use the I-C-E P-P-Panini structure when working with major quotes: Introduce the quote, Cite it, then Explain it by **Paraphrasing, Parsing, and Plugging** it into your argument.

3. Formatting/Mechanics. Proofreading, editing, and proper formatting (see below).

The best papers will **avoid...**

- too much summary
- too much direct quoting (expecting quotes to “speak for themselves”)
- too much personal experience (e.g. “This story made me sad/excited/confused”)
- too much reliance **ONLY** on what we talked about in class (re-stating class discussion)
- tangents that ignore the motivating question

Remember to seek out any assistance you need: use the resources on campus or visit my office hours if you have questions about your progress or goals for this assignment. I’m happy to read the first 2 pages of your draft by email, if you a) email me from your City Tech account, b) ask a *specific* question (not “Can you read this?”), and c) ask me by 9/28.

I’m also happy to discuss your draft during office hours - again, if you come to me by 9/28, and if you have a specific question you want me to answer.

Academic Integrity:

Please remember the College’s policy on academic integrity (refer to the course syllabus or your student handbook). **Acts of plagiarism will result in a zero (0) for this assignment, and may result in further penalty.** I can and will use plagiarism checking software.

Format. Your essay must...

- 1) be submitted online **in a Word .doc format**,
- 2) include an italicized title (NOT “Fiction Essay”!)
- 3) have a header with your surname and page number on the top right corner of each page,
- 4) have your *name, assignment name* (i.e. Introduction to Fiction Paper 1), *course number, instructor name*, and *due date* on the top left corner of the first page.