Prof. Gold

ENG 2400

Fall 2013

First Essay Assignment

Paper Length: 4-6 Pages

Due Date: October 17, 2013

This assignment has been designed to help you gain experience in writing an essay that analyzes works of film and literature on thematic, generic, and formal levels.

**Learning Goals:**

* Perform close readings of texts (film and literature), paying careful attention in written texts to language, syntax, rhythm, and form, and in visual texts to dialogue, lighting, editing, direction
* Analyze formal and stylistics properties of multiple texts;
* Compare and contrast the treatment of similar motifs and themes in multiple works;
* Center each paragraph around a specific subject;
* Start each paragraph with a topic sentence;
* Use transition statements to move the reader from topic to topic;
* Quote from and respond to our assigned readings;
* Cite quotations parenthetically and in a Works Cited list according to MLA format;
* Write with clear, grammatically correct prose.

**Assignment: Write an essay that responds to one of the following prompts:**

1. We’ve watched a number of films and read a novel that can be described as being part of the “film noir” genre. Write an essay that proposes a definition of noir and then that explains how the various texts we’ve encountered this semester are aligned or misaligned with your definition.
2. Compare the protagonists of the films we’ve viewed and book we’ve read. What qualities or characteristics seem to unify these protagonists? In what ways are they similar or different? Of all of these protagonists, which one most seems to exemplify the film noir archetypical hero? Why?
3. Compare the book and film versions of *Double Indemnity*. Explore differences between them and argue why one version of the story is more effective as noir than the other.
4. Analyze a specific scene in one of the movies we’ve watched or texts we’ve read this semester and argue for its place as *the* most important scene in the book or film. Explain how it captures the central themes of the larger narrative.

Your essay should be structured as a unified essay. It should have an overall argument that is summarized in a thesis statement, and each paragraph should be centered around a single topic. Avoid overly schematic writing strategies (such as devoting alternating paragraphs to each text) and instead use the principles of close reading to lead to in-depth explorations of each text.

This assignment does not require outside research. Should you choose to consult outside sources, you must cite those sources appropriately in the paper itself.

Requirements:

* Your essay must have an original title that captures the argument of your paper in an engaging, creative way.
* The essay must be typed in 12pt Times New Roman font with 1” borders on every page.
* Should you use additional sources, your essay must include a list of Works Cited in accordance with MLA style.