Prof. Gold

ENG 2400

Fall 2013

Second Essay Assignment

Paper Length: 4 pages

Due Date: December 19, 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:

Respond to one of the following essay prompts by writing a four page essay, ensuring that you use evidence from our texts to support your points:

1. Noir protagonists often come up against a force that thwarts them on their quest to unravel a mystery. Discuss the differences you see between the people or systems thwarting noir protagonists through various texts and eras, and make an argument about how the changing nature of the obstacles protagonists face says something larger about the genre and/or about the social/historical contexts in which the texts were created. Your essay must discuss recent texts and films we’ve explored, such as *1984*, *Brazil*, *Chinatown*, and *Blade Runner*.
2. What's love got to do with the noir genre? Make an argument for the role that love plays in noir texts as shown through various examples we've explored this semester, with particular attention to the more recent texts we've read and viewed. What does the treatment of love in these texts suggest about the moral or emotional values of the noir genre?
3. Compare *1984*'s Winston with Sam Lowry, the main character from *Brazil*. What characteristics do they share, and how do they differ and/or how are they similar to traditional film noir protagonists?
4. Write an essay that discusses the role of surveillance and paranoia in *1984* and *Brazil*. What do these texts have to say about what happens when people are watched, and know they are being watched, by their governments? How do the situations described in those texts compare to our own moment and recent revelations about the NSA’s Prism program?

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 that is described in the first sentence of that paragraph.

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.