

# Essay 1

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**Rough Draft Due:** Tuesday, 9/27 (in class)

**Final Draft Due:** Thursday, 9/29 by 11:59 pm (via Safe Assignments)

**Length:** 1000 words, minimum

**Format:** MLA format (double spaced, one inch margins, Times New Roman font, including an original title and a header that provides your name, instructor name, class title, and due date)

**Assignment:**

- Write an interpretation and analysis of *The Bell Jar*. You may use one of the Critical Response Blog prompts to get started, or you may develop your own argument independently
- Include an identifiable, insightful, and arguable thesis statement
- Support your thesis by providing specific examples from the text paired with a logical and clearly explained argument
- Incorporate *at least one* of the concepts we have covered in class lectures about feminism, gender, sex, sexuality, and identity in your main argument
- Incorporate concepts/terms from *at least one* of the secondary readings from this unit (“An Appeal Against Female Suffrage”, “Ain’t I a Woman?,” *The Feminine Mystique*, “Components of Gender,” “A Black Feminist Statement,” or “Age, Race, Class and Sex: Women Redefining Difference”)
- Properly quote, paraphrase, and cite all materials you refer to in the essay

**Writing about Literature:** When writing an essay about literature, “your specific goal with an interpretive claim isn’t so much to offer the *best* interpretation as it is to offer a *provocative* perspective—one that is insightful, well supported, and unique in the sense it’s presented from your individual point of view” (“Writing about Literature” 206). You may develop a thesis statement by asking a question about a plot point and then exploring your answers, you may develop a thesis by asking questions about what a character represents in a literary text, or you may develop a thesis by asking questions about the dominant themes within a text and developing an insightful idea from those questions.

**Tips:** Begin thinking about your paper now. With each text we read and discuss in class, consider what possible paper ideas you might have. If you have an insight or interpretation, make note of it as a possibility for your essay.

Also, make plenty of notes in your text or in a clearly labeled notebook. Write down the page numbers of relevant quotes, label themes in the margins, etc. This will help you to find and develop the support you need to include to make your argument convincing.

If you have any questions about the assignment or would like to discuss ideas, please talk to me. You may visit my office hours, email, talk to me after class, or make an appointment to meet with me.