

# COMMONPLACE BOOK

Each week, you will be responsible for creating a response to the weekly readings. For the first part of the semester, I will stipulate guidelines for your response and for the remainder of the semester, you will choose your response style based on your personal preference. You will not be graded on artistic merit, so the point is you need to try pushing beyond the typical journal entries of only writing as a way of responding to a literary text.

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## RESPONSE/ENTRY #2

Create a visual collage of what you think you'll learn/what you want to learn in this semester of studying drama, theatre, and plays as acts of imaginative resistance, especially as pertains to Black American theatre and girlhood studies. This can be analog or digital & you need to incorporate at least five different images to represent your thoughts. Upload to D2L.

## RESPONSE/ENTRY #3

Write a 300-word response to one of the texts that analyzes a specific character who you feel particularly drawn to. It could be that you agree with this character, you hate this character, you don't understand this character, etc. - Your response needs to center on one character from one of the readings. Be sure to state the title and author of your chosen text.

## RESPONSE/ENTRY #4

Choose an overarching theme from one of the weekly readings and find two pieces of visual art that also represent this theme. The artwork can be of any medium (painting, sculpture, quilt, photography, video, film, etc.), and you need to include the name of the artwork and artist(s). I would like for your chosen art pieces to be from two different time periods - look for art that crosses centuries - but is showing the same theme as the readings we're doing.

## RESPONSE/ENTRY #5

Write a very short scene in which a character from one of this week's readings says goodbye in an airport to someone from another play. Make sure your scene includes stage directions and any necessary information. Upload as a text to D2L.

## RESPONSE/ENTRY #6

Create a very short story (2-5 minutes) based on a scene from one of the weekly readings. Your very short story should have a plot structure (exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and denouement) and give readers insight into a tone shift that you noted from one of the weekly readings. Thus, your own very short story can shift from happy sad, downtrodden to uplifting, or even from very angry to just a little less angry. The point being, within your very short story something has to happen to shift the tone of where it ends and begins. This story you will read as a podcast and upload to D2L.

## RESPONSE/ENTRY #7

Create a collage of text. Choose the most important sentences/words/paragraphs from each of this week's readings and using different fonts, styles, etc. create a collage that is entirely made up of the texts you choose. You have to represent each reading with at least a sentence or thought from that author's writing.

## RESPONSE/ENTRY #8

Create a map of a setting in one of the weekly readings. You can draw the map, use Google maps to drop pins, or generate a map digitally, or print a map and color in what you want. You will need to name your map and explain which story and setting and time period it represents. Even if the reading you choose is a fictional place, you can use clues from the story to create a map of your own imagination. Even if the reading you choose only takes place in one room, you can draw and that room.

## RESPONSE/ENTRY #9

Interview a professor or professional who you admire about their favorite play. Ask them about the concepts you've learned so far, and why they do or do not think theatre and drama are important aspects of our contemporary American culture. You can choose to upload your interview as a podcast or as a script.

## RESPONSE/ENTRY #10-15

Open Form. Choose to repeat any of the above or come up with your own way to engage with and respond to the weekly readings. Please do not repeat any type of response more than three times.

# GROUP PROPOSAL

In this assignment you will work in groups of 3-4 to create a proposal intended to solve a problem on campus or in the greater community. Once you have your group, I will assign you a proposal topic on which you will conduct further research. All of the assigned materials must be featured in the final project (think annotation), and secondary materials are also welcomed. This "essay" will be composed in a new media format of a website! You can use a blog format like Tumblr or a wiki, an actual website builder like Weebly or Wix, or even an Instagram or Twitter page. Your final "paper" must include visual, audio, and interactive elements, along with any and all written annotations. Your final project should be the equivalent of apx 2000 words, but this depends a bit on which topic your group chooses. Each group will need to meet with me (phone conference or in person) to finalize details on their topic.

## WEBSITE FORMAT

As with a tradition written paper, your new media proposal will need to follow a specific format. Consider how you will link and use navigation tools to create your proposal.

1. **Introduction** - The introduction serves to inform your reader of the history of the proposal (if applicable) or to introduce a subject to an informed/uninformed audience. This is the most important part of your paper in some respects. You need to both introduce the topic and show the audience why they should care about this topic. It's often helpful to begin with an interesting fact, statistic, or anecdote to grab the reader's attention. Typically, people only make proposal to solve a problem. As such, you'll want to highlight a particular problem that you think your proposal would solve. Know your audience so that you can emphasize the benefits your proposal would bring.

2. **Proposal** - This is a statement of purpose. This section should be brief and only discuss what your actual proposition is. It is okay for this section to be only a few sentences long if the proposal is short. Do not include details about how you will carry out the proposal in this section.

3. **Plan of Action** - How will you go about achieving your proposal? What will you do to show your audience that you are prepared? This is where you go into detail about how your proposal will be implemented. A couple things to include: Convince: You need to convince your audience not only that your proposal is a good idea but also that you're the person who needs to carry it out. Highlighting your qualifications about why you're suited for the task is helpful

if you're the one to carry out the proposal. Detail: In discussing the implementation, you'll want to give enough detail to show your audience that you've thought about how the process will work. That said, you don't want to bore them with overly-technical or boring details. Anticipate: Anticipating potential implementation problems is both good practice and communicates to your audience that you've thought carefully about your proposal and about potential stumbling blocks.

4. **Will it work?** - Focus this area on why the proposal will work. Quite simply, is it a viable proposal? You can draw on similar past experiences to show why this proposal will work just like previous ones. If you do not have this "past experience" option, focus on what you think your audience wants to hear. For example, if your manager really likes getting things done on time, then perhaps you might mention how your proposal can speed up productivity. Think logically here. \*Tip: Do not structure this section the same way as your "Benefits of..." section.

5. **Desired Outcomes** - Simple. State what the goals of your proposal are. It might seem repetitive with the sections where you mentioned the benefits, but it serves to really "drill" home the point.

6. **Necessary Resources** - Another simple part. What is needed to complete your proposal? Include tangible (paper, money, computers, etc.) and intangible items such as time.

7. **Preparations Made** - Show the audience that you know what you are doing. The more prepared you look the better your chances are to get the proposal passed (or get a better grade if it is for a class).

8. **Conclusion** - Do NOT restate your introduction here if you choose to mention the "history" of a certain proposal. However if you did not introduce your proposal with some historical background information, here is the part where you can quickly restate each section above: Proposal, plan of action, all the "why's" of the paper and so on.

9. **Works Cited/Consulted** - As in any essay or paper, cite your sources as appropriate. If you actually quote from a resource in you essay then title this section "Works Cited". If you do not cite anything word for word, use "Works Consulted".

# STUDENT PHILOSOPHY

In this mini-unit we will focus on creating knowledge about how you, as a student, view your role in the classroom and also how you see yourself as a learner. Part of this writing course is dedicated to developing your skills to critically engage with different types of texts and also for you to produce your own writings and texts based on what you learn from analyzing the assigned readings. One thing I want to highlight, is that while I am asking you (especially in the RAPs) to be analytically and critically engaged with the texts, this is not to be conflated with being negative or unnecessarily critical of the given authors for the sake of cruelty.

For this assignment, you will be required to produce a document/text, the equivalent of 300-500 words, that describes your philosophy of being a student. Most of you may initially be unfamiliar with this concept, but we will work through some introductory activities together to help you feel more comfortable and proceed with a better understanding of what this means.

Many of your professors and teachers have been required to write what is commonly known as a "Teaching Philosophy." This is a document used by various committees to decide issues like hiring and promotion. The Teaching Philosophy, according to the website for the Center for Educational Innovation at the University of Minnesota, "is a self-reflective statement of your beliefs about teaching and learning. It should also discuss how you put your beliefs into practice by including concrete examples of what you do or anticipate doing in the classroom." In this same vein, we will work on drafting "Student Philosophies," where you will reflect on your beliefs about being a student and learning. This exercise is meant to acquaint you with inquiry into where you learned how to be a student and what you expect as a student.

Part of my teaching philosophy is that the classroom is a symbiotic environment, thus I want to learn about your perceptions of being a student and what this role means to each of you will necessarily be different. As this concept of a "Student Philosophy" is something that is being developed, there are not copious examples for you to read and analyze to get features of the form. In some ways, this is the exciting stage of development, because you aren't confined to certain standards or precedent - you get to be the precedent setters. Below are some excerpts and ideas to help get you started. All of these examples take the form of written documents, but you have the option to be as creative as you would like with this assignment. If you have a song, video, T.V. episode, piece of artwork, etc. that will convey what you come to find as a guiding principle in your role of being a student, please feel free to include it in your document. Just use your Author's Note to justify the outlet through which you feel portraying your philosophy as a student is most effective.

# SAMPLING FROM MY RESEARCH

1. My philosophy as a student is that learning is optimized when I am able to combine what I am learning in class with my previous knowledge, outside research, and related topics. This philosophy is what I try to use in all my classes and has proved pretty effective thus far in my life.

2. I believe I have a fairly decent student philosophy and it has helped me in the past. As a student, I always take each class serious, even if I can't stand the material I try to stay on top of my work. I usually take in a lot more info in the classes I am interested in and focus on the things that will really act to benefit me in the future.

3. As a student, my philosophy it that I get exactly what I put in. Input = output. Work = good grade. Procrastination = stress and poor grade.

4. My philosophy as a student involves doing my absolute best to obtain + understand the information that my teacher presents. If I do not understand it is my responsibility to somehow obtain a better understanding.

5. Philosophy as a student should be for the student to think deeply and reflect while learning a subject. A student should consider why it is important to learn the subject and the ways in which it is going to impact their life.

6. My philosophy as a student would probably have to be "you get out what you put in", meaning if you choose to put in 110% into every class and are willing to do the work to get the outcome you want, you'll most likely get it. Whereas if you decided to skip classes and never study, the only person to blame for low grades or lack of knowledge is yourself.

7. My student philosophy is to acquire the necessary tools to think and analyze critically and independently, to seek knowledge in everything and to find my own personal path to apply this knowledge in the real world for the betterment of humanity. As a student, I also realize my responsibility to contribute to the mutual learning process that should define each class. That the process of enhancing my understanding of a new topic will in turn enhance the learning process of my peers and also the professor. And that ultimately, every participant in the class took one step closer to understanding truth in a coherent, noncompetitive, inclusive way.



# VISUAL ARGUMENT

The type of visual you select (or create) for this project is virtually unlimited. The only restriction is that it must be an argument (and according to our textbook, "everything's an argument") — it has a clear claim intended to persuade an audience on an issue related to your research topic.

Types of visual arguments you can choose include:

- music videos
- visual art (paintings, sculptures, illustrations, photography)
- posters (such as Public Service Announcements and others)
- advocacy ads
- political cartoons
- YouTube videos (opt for shorter lengths)
- info-graphics

Option 1: Create your own visual argument based on the research issue you did in your Annotated Bibliography and explain its rhetorical construction.

Option 2: Rhetorically analyze the effectiveness of an existing visual argument based on your research issue.

## RHETORICAL CONTEXT

Whether you are creating or evaluating a visual argument you must consider the rhetorical construction of the argument, which includes the following elements:

The message of the author(s). 2. effectiveness of the message within a specific context

## WHAT TO INCLUDE

- In text citations, MLA 8
- Works Cited page, MLA 8
- Visuals to support your analysis, along with captions
- Links to supporting texts when necessary
- Primary Research (interviews, surveys, polls, etc.)
- Secondary support on your topic (articles, books, etc.)
- Communication documentation on reaching out to community leaders for possible meetings.

# FINAL REFLECTION

The end of this semester draws closer each day! As your final project in this course, take some time to look back on what you have learned in our time together. Write 500 - 700 words on the simple topic: What did you learn? Feel open to take this final assignment in any direction you want to focus on, either what you learned about drama, monologues, theatre, literature, imagination as resistance to social oppression, girlhood, Black girlhood, PTSS, the power of our minds, etc. What will you always remember? Which readings were a mirror, window or sliding glass door? What made you wander? What did you face?

Alternatively, you can just write about what you learned from reading and watching all the various texts in this course. Or, just tell me what you learned about someone in the class or even yourself that doesn't seemingly connect to the topic of literature and drama. Did you learn how to play a new card game? Did you learn how to manage your time better? Did you learn how to write a paper in one day? Really, just tell me what you have learned and why it matters to you!

# FINAL REFLECTION

The end of this semester draws closer each day! As your final project in this course, take some time to look back on what you have learned in our time together. Write 300 - 500 words on the simple topic: What did you learn? Feel open to take this final assignment in any direction you want to focus on, either what you learned about writing personal narratives, doing collaborative work, etc. Or, you can just write about what you learned from reading and watching all the various texts in this course. Or, just tell me what you learned about someone in the class or even yourself that doesn't seemingly connect to the topic of writing. Did you learn how to play a new card game? Did you learn how to manage your time better? Did you learn how to write a paper in one day? Really, just tell me what you have learned and why it matters to you!

# TWITTER DISCUSSION

# DISCUSSION LEADER

For the weeks when you are not discussion leader, you will need to respond with a written Tweet or a 1-2 minute audio/video recorded Tweet response to the discussion leaders' questions. You must respond to all the questions each week. So, if one week has 3 Discussion Leaders and they each pose one question, you have to answer all three questions. If another week has 4 Discussion Leaders and they each pose one question, then you have to answer all four questions.

Since we will not be meeting in-person, these discussion boards become an excellent place where we will interact collectively with the weekly readings (outside of the synchronous Zoom meetings). Thus, it is imperative that you use this space to help yourself and your fellow course-mates become better acquainted with the materials. Make sure your responses are building off of what anyone who has already responded has to say. Your responses are due each Thursday at 5:30pm.

I've chosen to have this discussion as a social media and public facing assignment because while we are all confined to some degree because of the global pandemic, the point of academic discourse is to engage a greater community and find a way to become a part of larger conversations or to start these conversations in a meaningful way. While the classroom is a great place to engage in discussion, your analytical skills have to develop so you can curate the way you talk to, with, and about our readings – many of which have authors that are still living and active on social media. Use this experience to help establish your academic digital footprint – so when you take your next steps in life – you have proof and evidence of being able to elevate and extend the level of discourse on these very public sites.

If you are feeling uneasy about doing a public-facing assignment, below are some suggestions that may help you become more comfortable with it. This is a requirement of our course for an Assessment of Very Good or Excellent work - thus if it does not align with your goals for this course, you may want to consider taking a different class.

Create a new Twitter account specifically for this class. You can use a pseudonym if you prefer - and this may be a good idea if you plan to establish a professional or academic footprint for your future plans.

Set your account to private, and rely solely on uploading screenshots. Confer with friends and family and peers before uploading your responses. After taking a screenshot of your response and uploading it to D2L, you can delete the post in cyberspace.

Please let me know if you have any further questions, comments, concerns, ideas about this assignment.

Once in the semester you will lead our course discussion based on your research and preparation of the Discussion Leader Commentary Assignment sheet in D2L. The week you're assigned as Discussion Leader, you serve as a facilitator who has prepared 1-2 questions as a catalyst for engaging us with what you have found significant, confusing, or exciting about the plays as they relate to our theoretical framework. I will try to accommodate preference as much as is possible. This serves as your presentation element of the class, and you will need to be prepared to record yourself explaining your preliminary research and questions for your fellow students (3-5 minutes). You will also then post your discussion question to Twitter, where your classmates will respond.

- Read the assigned plays and theory pieces for your week.
- In a Word document, complete the Discussion Leader Commentary Assignment sheet in D2L. Answer the questions fully and thoughtfully.
- Prepare and record a 3-5 minute presentation of your preliminary analysis of the play and how it relates to the theoretical framework of our course. Upload to the discussion board in D2L.
- End your video presentation with 1-2 discussion questions, which you will also write out and post to Twitter for your classmates to respond. Post a screenshot of your Twitter post into D2L.