Genre Critique

**ENGL&101, Darley-Vanis, Essay Two**

## Due Date

First completed draft due Wednesday, Feb. 7; letters to peers due Feb. 9; final, revised copy due Feb. 14.

## Purpose

## In your academic and personal lives, you will bump into many different genres, and each one has its own cultural significance. By way of this assignment, you will select and then introduce a genre to an audience unfamiliar with your choice, and by completing it, you will gain skills that matter not just in this course and college but, even more importantly, for your needs in the workplace. There, your ability to recognize and work in communications by specific type will be crucial. The problem to solve is this: how do you analyze and teach the workings of a genre in such a way that your audience will understand it and be able to navigate it, too? Specifically, here is what we’re learning:

**Skills**

* **Your ability to analyze texts and situations that have meaning in a community and that impact by way of their communicative type;**
* **Your ability to recognize audience and to devise a communication for that audience;**
* **Your ability to interpret carefully and to summarize what you’ve read or heard with care.**

**Knowledge**

**You will learn how genres reflect the values of a discourse community but also further shape those values;**

**You will discover that summary is a challenge, as it requires careful listening and fair representation;**

**You will practice and become familiar with how to synthesize meaningfully, and only after having listened carefully, you will bring different communications together in a meaningful way for an audience.**

## Task

## In order to complete this assignment, you will walk thoughtfully through the following steps.

1. Pick a genre and locate two examples of it.
2. Analyze your two samples. Begin to think about how you will critique them.
3. At this point, together in class, we will do some practice with this, looking at sample genre critiques so that you will gain familiarity with this task.
4. Draft an essay with an introduction, a body section which summarizes and analyzes each artifact, and a conclusion.
	* Introduction: Introduce your reader to the genre. What is it, and how familiar is it in American life? When would your reader come into contact with this genre, and how did it first come to your attention? You can ease your reader into this conversation in any way you wish, but think about how to bring her gently into the conversation. (See *RFW* 22-23 for coaching on how to write an introduction. This introduction will have no thesis, so how you begin is completely up to you; just keep your reader’s needs in mind.)
	* Body: It would be wise to plan the body of your essay like the informal outline example on page 19 of *RFW*. The following bullets will give you an idea of how to organize the paragraphs.
		+ - A summary, the “what” of the first example of the genre you are looking at. Carefully study and use the chart in RFW on 73 for how to write a summary; my guess is that this “what” or summary element will take one paragraph of space to do well, as your reader is not looking at this item. You are her eyes/ears/reporter on what it is you’re seeing.
			- Several paragraphs of analysis. How does this thing work? What is the “how” or rhetorical analysis of this object or item? Use the terms that you’ve learned from Nicotra’s *Becoming Rhetorical* to help you. By the time that you turn this in, we will have read 8-22 and 26-48 of her text, giving you plenty of ways in which to talk about the how of your chosen topic.
			- Rinse and repeat. Provide a second summary, a summary of the second example of your genre. Next, analysis. Once again, create several body paragraphs dedicated to the “how” of this second example of the genre.
	* Conclusion: Here are some questions to consider and to make clear for your reader as you close this study. What does the genre allow its creators to do, and what does it seem to do well? Additionally, what are the limitations with this genre that you have noticed? How are these limitations linked to the genre’s features, and, if possible, how might the genre change to better engage its intended audience? See *RFW* on 25 for some tips on writing conclusions.

## Criteria for Success

To be successful in this task, each example of your chosen genre should receive equal air time. There should be approximately four to five paragraphs of study (one of summary, most of analysis) on each. Important note: you should be using only the two sources for this assignment, meaning that you’ll have a works cited list with only two items. Read deeply on these two samples of the genre only (no matter what kind of reading that may be).

See the next two pages to understand the value of this assignment and how it will be assessed. Your product will most likely be four to

five pages long, and depending on the genre you choose, it will most likely include a works cited list (as a separate and additional page) and in-text citations formatted according to MLA style (see *RFW* readings from 441-457 as well as the entire teal-tabbed section of *RFW* for help).

English 101 Essay Assessment: Genre Critique

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|   | An Exemplary Essay: | A Skilled Essay: | A Developing Essay: | An Undeveloped Essay: |
| Thesis and Focus (25 percent) SLO 3, 5  | --asserts a clear, sophisticated, arguable thesis/point to end that has been reasonably developed --remains focused on the rhetorical study throughout in an immediately recognizable way--meets the assigned topic and purpose | --asserts a clear, arguable thesis/point to end that has been reasonably developed --remains largely focused on the rhetorical study --meets the assigned topic and purpose | --states a thesis or main point that may not be clear or arguable or that cannot be reasonably developed in this length of essay--occasionally strays from the study which is the focus of this task--takes inappropriate liberties with the assigned topic and purpose | --does not state a thesis or states a thesis/main point that the writer may abandon --frequently strays from the rhetorical study or discusses a different study entirely--may not meet the assigned topic and purpose |
| Reasoning and Support(25 percent) SLO 2, 4, 5, 6  | --thoroughly supports the study with a rich variety of evidence, using an appropriate and sophisticated argumentative strategy--engages the subject of the genre critique in a meaningful, sophisticated way--accurately and effectively summarizes, paraphrases, and quotes relevant source material and offers analysis of all source material  | --sufficiently supports the study using some variety of evidence--engages the chosen genre--summarizes, paraphrases, and quotes relevant source material in a largely accurate way with some analysis  | --provides some evidence to support the study, but lacks variety or more is needed--includes but does not adequately engage the genre samples in question--summarizes, paraphrases, and quotes source material with some accuracy, though source material may not be entirely relevant or analyzed | --provides insufficient evidence to support the study--does not include the two examples of the genre in a recognizable way--includes source material that is inaccurately represented or irrelevant to the argument--lacks analysis of source material |
| Organization SLO 5(20 percent)   | --presents a logical progression of ideas based on the study--maintains focus within each paragraph--uses a highly effective title, introduction, and conclusion--provides clear and directive topic sentences and sophisticated transitions within and between paragraphs--includes logical paragraph breaks | --presents a largely logical progression of ideas based on the study--maintains focus within most paragraphs--uses a satisfactory title, introduction, and conclusion--mostly provides topic sentences and has basic transitions within and between paragraphs--includes largely logical paragraph breaks | --relies on a progression of ideas that is not entirely logical and/or is not always related to the study--loses focus within some paragraphs--uses an introduction and conclusion, though one or both might be limited; might be missing a title --occasionally provides topic sentences and uses transitions inconsistently within and/or between paragraphs--breaks paragraphs in ways that may not always be logical to the reader | --has a progression of ideas that is not logical and/or is not based on the study--does not maintain focus within paragraphs--might use a title, introduction, and/or conclusion though one or more might be limited or missing--largely fails to provide topic sentences and either does not use transitions or uses transitions that are ineffective--does not use logical paragraph breaks |
| Source Integration and MLA Citation SLO 2(10 percent)   | --thoroughly integrates source material with varied and effective signal phrasing--frames source material with the student’s own ideas--maintains strict ethical standards and avoids plagiarism through correct and precise paraphrasing, use of quotation marks, in-text citations and an MLA works cited page--uses direct quotes sparingly and to good effect | --integrates most source material with signal phrasing--provides some framing of source material--avoids plagiarism through competent paraphrasing and use of quotation marks, and mostly correct in-text citations and an MLA works cited page--relies somewhat too much on direct quotes  | --largely lacks clear signal phrasing--provides minimal framing of source material--includes some weak paraphrasing, errors in the use of quotation marks, and/or errors in the in-text citations or an MLA works cited page--uses direct quote where paraphrase or summary would be more appropriate   | · lacks signal phrasing--lacks framing of source material--includes weak or inadequate paraphrasing and/or significant errors in the use of quotation marks--includes significant errors in the in-text citations and/or an MLA works cited page, or lacks one or both of these--might be unintentionally plagiarizing sources because of the above weaknesses--might use direct quotation to the exclusion of paraphrase and summary |
| Voice & Style SLO 6, 7(10 percent)  | --effectively engages an academic audience--employs varied sentence structures for style and reader interest--exhibits a precise and sophisticated vocabulary | --targets an academic audience--uses varied sentences, but may occasionally repeat certain structures and lengths--exhibits largely effective word choice though there may some misuse, ineffective repetition, and/or a minimal use of slang/cliché. | --does not consistently engage an academic audience--exhibits some lack of control over sentence structures, possibly repeating a simple syntax or creating a needlessly complex syntax--may be limited by an inadequate vocabulary, with word choice that is imprecise, repetitive, and/or reliant on slang and cliché | --lacks awareness of an academic audience--lacks control of sentence structures, relying on careless or received patterns--uses an imprecise and simplistic vocabulary that might also contain deceptive or inflammatory language and that might be heavily reliant on slang and cliché |
| Conventions of Grammar, Mechanics, & Page Layout SLO 7(10 percent)   | --does not display any serious patterns of error--maintains a consistent point of view and appropriate use of tense--contains very few mistakes with syntax, grammar, and punctuation, and none that interfere with meaning--correctly uses MLA standards for page layout  | --may display patterns of error, which do not interfere with meaning--rarely strays from a consistent point of view and an appropriate use of tense--features occasional mistakes with syntax, grammar, and punctuation, but not enough to significantly interfere with meaning--largely uses MLA standards for page layout correctly with few mistakes | --displays patterns of error that either distract or sometimes interfere with meaning--tends to stray from a consistent point of view and appropriate use of tense--approaches standard written English, but significant mistakes with syntax, grammar, and punctuation make meaning unclear at points--approaches the use of MLA standards for page layout | --displays serious patterns of error that substantially interfere with meaning--lacks control over point of view and tense--does not show mastery of the conventions of standard written English, and serious mistakes with syntax, grammar, and punctuation compromise clear communication--does not display knowledge of MLA standards for page layout |