**English Composition I, Essay Two**

**Critiquing a Genre**

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**First completed draft due Wednesday, Feb. 7;**

**Letters to peers due Feb. 9; final, revised copy due Feb. 14**

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*Things you need to know*: Genres, according to Nicotra, are “somewhat stabilized yet flexible forms of communication that have developed over time and in response to all these other rhetorical factors: purpose, audience, context, exigence, modalities, media, and circulation” (42). She goes on to say, “Almost any form of communication you can think of is a genre” (42), naming several at that point in her text.

*Object of critiquing a genre*: Your goal is to move through a careful critique of a genre that you choose. You’ll study two samples from that genre, writing meaningfully to show your reader why your genre needs to change as well as what is currently working and effective for its audience. You will employ rhetorical analysis and all of the knowledge from Nicotra’s text, all that we’ve read to date, in order to analyze and critique these two examples of the genre of your choice.

*Organizing this essay for a reader:* Assume that your audience has seen the genre you have selected, but this reader has never really studied it or considered it rhetorically. It may even be something that she walks by every day, but she has never stopped to think about it in this more educated, rhetorical way. So in order for this to make sense to her, think about the pieces of the writing that she’ll need in order to be able to follow you:

* An 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 it, 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 in gently to 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.)
* It would be wise to plan the body of your essay like the informal outline example on 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 to do, 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 to focus 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 subject.
  + Rinse and repeat. Provide a second summary, a summary of the second example of your genre.
  + Analysis: once again, give this second example that same eye to the “how.” Use the lenses of rhetorical analysis that you have learned from Nicotra’s text, considering a few of the many ways in which you can study this second example. Most likely, as you did with your first sample of the genre, each body paragraph will be dedicated to one “how,” one way to consider the subject of your study rhetorically.
  + Each example of the genre should receive equal air time, meaning that you’ll study each with equal attention and focus. There should be, as a ballpark guess, about four to five paragraphs of study (one of summary, most of analysis) on each. And one last important note: you should be using only 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.)
* To conclude, here are some questions to consider and to make clear for your reader: what does this 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.

*Last (but important) considerations*: Please see the next two pages to understand the values of this assignment and how it will be assessed. Your product will most likely be about four 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 teal-colored section of your handbook).

**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**    **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**    **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** | --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** | --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** | --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** | --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 |

* A student’s overall grade is determined by the balance of assessments; however, an “Undeveloped” assessment in one or more areas might lead to an overall failing assignment grade.