Assessment Guidelines
ENG4474 The Nature of the Beast in American Literature
Fall 2019

Examination

The assessment for the course is based on a term paper of 12 - 15 pages. This does not include references and bibliography. The exam paper must follow further guidelines to be distributed in class. You have the option of handing in a *problem statement* for the term paper during the semester, in order to get feedback from the teacher.

Term Paper Assignment (distributed to students in advance)

Assignment

Your paper for this course is an opportunity to show how effectively you can develop and support a persuasive academic argument related to the nature of the beast in U.S. literature and culture. The critical debate you choose to address is up to you, although you should address relevant issues we have studied related to animality studies, human-animal studies, posthumanist theory, and cultural studies (including critical analysis of race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, disability, and species). Your global claim should be supportable primarily in the context of course readings, unless I have talked with you in advance. Your argument does not necessarily need to engage with critical debates about "real" animals (unless it would be relevant), but it should at least engage with discourses of animality. You may also work primarily on theoretical and historical texts, rather than the assigned novels.

Make sure your paper:

- ***Includes a clear and logical problem statement***. Your global claim should be debatable, supportable, and significant for your intended audience.
- ***Engages primarily with course texts.*** Be sure to ***re-read the course materials*** that you will use for your paper, and make sure you understand those readings in relation to how they have been discussed in class lectures and discussions.
- ***Includes and engages with your own scholarly research.*** Scholarly sources should be drawn from peer-reviewed journal articles and/or books published by university or academic presses.
- ***Cites evidence and examples*** from both primary and secondary sources.

Requirements

- **Papers due: 9 December at 11:00 AM (via Canvas)**
- Proofread (very carefully) to avoid grammar and spelling errors.
- Include a Works Cited page and use in-text citations according to MLA guidelines.
- Avoid plagiarism (a very serious offense).
- Papers should be typed, 1.5-spaced, with 2.5 cm margins, 12 pt. Times New Roman font, no extra spaces between paragraphs.
- Papers should be 12-15 pages, not counting the Works Cited page.

Suggestions

- Choose texts and topics that really grab your attention. Find ways to engage with critical discussions that you think are important and interesting. Join a critical community by taking up a debate that matters for you and your audience!
- Begin with a title that suggests something that might catch the attention of your intended audience, while also indicating what the paper addresses.

- Focusing on just one primary text is often the best way to explore it in depth.
- Be sure to think about and respond to the best arguments *against* your global claim and/or sub-claims. Remember that you are trying to be persuasive to an audience that would be invested in disagreeing with you.
- You have the option of submitting a draft of a problem statement in order to receive individual feedback: due Friday, 6 November, emailed to Michael.Lundblad@ilos.uio.no. The draft of a problem statement is not a required assignment.

Term Paper Assessment

Essays will be marked holistically, with no specific percentage of marks for any one aspect. The marker will thus be making an overall judgment of the quality of the piece of work as a whole. Weaknesses in one area of the criteria may be compensated for by particular skill in another. Independence of thought and evidence of analytical ability will be rewarded.

Good:

1. Work at the highest levels will present a problem statement which is argumentative, specific and substantiated (there is evidence to support it).
2. The problem statement assumes the form of an argument which can consist of several linked questions. The student's own argument is developed in relation to adequate secondary research and engagement with relevant critical debates. There is a link between problem statement and title, and between problem statement and discussion.
3. The essay has a clear structure. The student considers the flow of the argument from paragraph to paragraph and sustains the argument throughout. The various points made are relevant to the problem under consideration in the essay.
4. The essay engages in detailed analysis, developing a critical argument about discourses of speciesism, racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, or other oppressive frameworks. The student manages to present and develop his/her own ideas.
5. The essay is written in formal English of a high standard, with no mistakes of grammar or spelling.

Average:

1. Includes a problem statement, which assumes the form of an argument and is for the most part sustained throughout.
2. The problem statement is developed in relation to adequate secondary research.
3. The essay adopts a clear structure and the points made are relevant to the problem under consideration throughout.
4. The essay engages in analysis, and demonstrates some awareness of the situatedness of the theory in question. It presents and to some extent develops the student's own ideas.
5. The essay is written for the most part in correct English, with only minor mistakes of grammar or spelling.

Poor:

1. The student's problem statement is excessively general or vague, or lacks substantiating evidence.
2. The problem statement is not developed adequately in relation to secondary research, although some independent research is included.
3. The structure lacks logic, and the points made are occasionally irrelevant to the problem under consideration.

4. The essay rarely engages in analysis, limiting itself to paraphrases of the theories in question. There are few ideas presented by the student.
5. There are errors in grammar and spelling, though these do not prevent understanding of the essay text.

Unacceptable:
1. The essay lacks a problem statement.
2. The essay does not engage with secondary research.
3. The structure is illogical and confusing. The points made lack relevance.
4. The essay lacks analysis, simply providing more or less adequate paraphrases of the theories in question.
5. The essay is poorly written with numerous errors of grammar and spelling.