

Essay I: Analysis of a Song

"Music is a moral law. It gives soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and charm and gaiety to life and to everything." -Plato

Assignment Description:

As Plato says, music is far more than just vocal sounds and musical notes, it provides in an insight to the human "soul" and therefore provides us with a deeper and more holistic understanding of society at large. In this essay your goal will be to use both inquiry and analysis to examine the chief theme of a song (your "text") by exploring the rhetorical choices of not only the lyrics, but also the structure and music (tone/mood /rhythm) as well. In short, how do all these choices create and/or contribute to the overall theme of the song? Essentially "why" were these choices made?

Requirements:

In your paper you must include a clear thesis statement that leads into a formal academic and cohesive argument about how your song establishes its overall theme and meaning. In doing so you should determine what the intention of the overall song is. Challenge yourself to analyze not only the lyrics, but also the rhetorical choices the music makes as well.

All songs must be approved by me by September 3rd. You can either e-mail it to me, show it to me in class, or come by my office at any time before then. If you are having trouble choosing a song I would be more than happy to provide suggestions.

Suggestions:

You have freedom in what songs you would like to work with. With this in mind, I advise you to pick a song that has a clear message -- as some songs lack themes or can be simplistic in nature. This is not to say that those songs would be poor choices -- rather, just make sure it is something that you feel a connection to and are passionate about, as often times those feelings are then reflected in your own writing and can prove to be empowering in your overall argument.

Also keep in mind that flow is extremely important in your paper to maintain good *ethos*. Make sure your thesis has a clear and specific argument with "fighting words." Be sure to have smooth transitions in your body that adhere to your thesis statement. Furthermore, if it helps, when editing read your paper out-load to yourself to help you catch awkward transitions and wording. Keep in mind that this is an argumentative academic essay, so first person (I, me, my) should be avoided and I expect the final draft to be carefully proof

Specifications:

Length..... 3-4 pages
Format..... MLA

Due Dates:

August 29th..... Ideas and Song
September 3rd..... Thesis Statement

Worth..... 10%

September 9th..... Conferences (HC 9092)

September 12th.....Workshop day, rough draft due

September 17th..... Final draft due