ENGLISH 307.01 LITERATURE FROM 1700 TO THE PRESENT

INTERPRETIVE E-LOCUTION ASSIGNMENT

Value: 20% of your final grade Due: Varies (see course schedule)

For this assignment, students will sign up for one of the poems, or part of one of the poems, that we are studying this semester. Students will record themselves reading their selected poem, and upload the audio file to D2L; please see the short guide to recording and uploading MP3 files to D2L. These recordings will comprise an audio anthology of the poems we are studying as a class. Instructors – Dr. Wiens and / or the TAs – will then play the recordings, or part of the recordings, when we study the poems in question. This will avoid the need to put students “on the spot” in asking them to read aloud in class. Since these readings will be shared with tutorial sections, or in some cases the entire class, students are encouraged to take multiple recordings of their readings of the poems until they have one they feel they can share. Creative approaches to these readings, such as “rapping” a poem or performing it in otherwise unorthodox ways, are not only permitted, but encouraged. Students may also use voice alteration applications if they like, but bear in mind that clarity of the reading is necessary in order for the reading to be an effective classroom tool.

For the second part of the assignment, each student will write a three to four-page (750-1000-word) reflective essay on the decisions they made in their reading of the poem. Reading a poem aloud is to some extent an act of interpretation, and this essay will ask you to make explicit the interpretive decisions you made in your reading of the poem. Some elements to consider include:

-volume, pitch, and frequency: did you adjust these at any points in the poem? Why or why not?

-multiple voices: is there more than one “speaker” in your poem? Did you adjust your voice to reflect these different speakers? Why or why not?

-sound patterns: did your reading reveal or emphasize sound patterns such as rhyme, alliteration, or assonance, or perhaps reveal significance to these sound patterns?

-spacing: in some poems, especially contemporary ones, space on the page is manipulated in significant ways. How did you account for this in your reading?

-line breaks, enjambment, and caesurae: did your reading reveal significance to these elements?

-punctuation and capitalization: in poems that use unorthodox punctuation and / or capitalization, was this reflected in your reading of the poem? Why or why not?

The most successful papers will attempt to tie a discussion of interpretive decisions made in reading the poem to an interpretive thesis about the poem as a whole. What is the poem saying or doing? Why did the poet employ the technology of poetry to say or do this? Students who choose to read their poem in an unorthodox manner should include some discussion of why they chose to read the poem in that way in their paper.

Students may be called upon to share with the class why they made some of the decisions they did in their reading of their poem; students who are not present when their poem is discussed will incur a third of a letter grade penalty. You will be submitting these assignments to the TA of your assigned tutorial; your TA will let you know whether or not you may submit the essay electronically, or if a hard copy is required.