

English 2530 Fall 2019 Midterm Essay Exam

Total points possible: 10

Exam accounts for 10% of your final grade

Directions: Read the prompts below, then plan, organize, and write each of the three essays. There are no formal papers for the class, so think of these short essays as mini-papers. I'm looking for your ability to write in a clear and concise manner, with sentences free of grammatical and mechanical errors; to organize your thoughts logically; to respond to the prompts in a thoughtful manner with sufficient examples from the readings; and to demonstrate your skills in close reading and literary analysis. See the "structure of an essay" handout on our course website for some pointers. See the assignment rubric for more details on assessment measures.

Part I. Personal Reflection Essay (20%)

Write a short essay of approximately 400 words in which you discuss a reading that has had an impact on you this semester. This impact could be pleasure/entertainment; it could change the way you think about a person/idea/concept; it could make you see something happening in our world today differently; and so on. Explain what the impact is and how that reading relates to you/your life/your ideas/your thinking.

Part II. Compare and Contrast Essay (30%)

Write an essay of approximately 600 words in which you compare and contrast two of the heroes we have read about so far in this course: Beowulf, Sir Gawain, the Knight from *The Wife of Bath's Tale*, and the Wife herself (yes, I'm considering her to be a hero!). You should explain what kind of hero each character is, as well as how their heroic characteristics reflect the historical period during which their stories were written (you should draw from your notes on the lectures here). What similarities do your two heroes share? What differences do they have despite those similarities? Your essay should develop as a series of paragraphs, each focused on one particular compare/contrast point. In an essay of 600 words, you'll most likely have 3–4 paragraphs.

Part III. Close Reading Essay (50%)

Write a close reading essay of approximately 800 words on **one** of the poems below (available on *Luminarium*). Show me that you can analyze a poem on your own. The essay should articulate your understanding of the poem based on a careful close reading/analysis, as well as any biographical, historical, or cultural information pertinent to the poem (you'll need to look this up and do a bit of academic research). You should quote the poem where necessary using MLA style. As a general guideline, your essay should begin with an introduction that establishes the poem about which you are writing, its historical context, and your interpretation of the poem (i.e., a thesis statement); several body paragraphs, each of which focuses on a specific point that supports your thesis and contains analysis of specific lines/passages in the poem; and a concluding paragraph that reiterates your main idea, makes a point that ties everything together, and offers a final takeaway point. You will probably need to look up key words, references, dates, autobiographical details, etc., but you need not cite outside sources unless you are quoting or paraphrasing from them directly. But let me stress: **I want all of the writing and ideas to be your own**, informed by words and information in the poem, and information you looked up to help you understand what the poem is about and why the poet made the decisions they did in writing the poem. **This is a close reading essay, not a "summarize-someone-else's-analysis-of-the-poem" essay.**

Select one of the following poems:

Thomas Wyatt, "They Flee From Me"

Edmund Spenser, Sonnet 54

Elizabeth I, "On Monsieur's Departure"

William Shakespeare, Sonnet 134