Expo E-25 Cynthia Taft

Spring 2014 ctaft@fas.harvard.edu

Workshop #1

Guidelines for comments and workshop discussions:

Begin by reading your partners’ essays for pleasure. Then, go to Workshop #1 under Writing Assignments, 1st series, and read through the list of questions. Now, reread the essay with these questions in mind. Finally, write out your comments on your partners’ essays. (You may want to download these questions.) Use each question as the point of departure for a thoughtful response (“yes” and “no” answers are of little value to your partners). Your finished comments on each essay should be at least one and a half pages long (double-spaced, not counting the questions themselves). When you are satisfied with what you have written, **print out two copies**; then, go back to the isite and **submit your comments in the appropriate dropbox**. Be sure to include your name and the name of the essay’s author with your comments. Be sure to complete the assignment by our next class on March 3rd, and post your comments **by 5pm** on the 3rd.

Remember that your comments are intended to help the writer create a more compelling version of his or her critical essay. Be tactful and complete. I have not asked you to comment on the writer’s grammatical or mechanical errors. I will take care of those problems myself. Thank you in advance for your thoughtful comments.

Workshop groups:

* + - Group One: Kevin, Ali, Chris
    - Group Two: Tom, Nick Gallimore, Emma
    - Group Three: Lisa, Gil, Robert
    - Group Four: Nicholas Greaves, Bryca, Edward

**\*\*\*If you would like to submit a new draft before your partners write their comments, please let me know as soon as possible.\*\*\***

Questions for Essay #1

SPECIFICS:

1. Does the introduction engage your interest? Any ideas for a livelier introduction?
2. Does the writer make clear what we can learn by examining this particular work (by Carson, Leopold, Turner, Beston, or Eiseley)? What is the main idea (central insight) of this essay? Where do you see that idea stated most clearly?
3. Did you learn enough about the original work to enable you to follow the writer’s analysis?
4. How well does the writer handle evidence from the original work? Is there enough supporting evidence within each paragraph? If not, point out weak spots.
5. How well does the writer handle internal transitions? Can you follow the logic that leads from one paragraph to the next? Identify any gaps.
6. How effective is the writer’s conclusion? What changes or additions might you suggest?
7. Reconsider the introduction in the light of the conclusion. Does the introduction point the reader in the right direction? Would you suggest any additions to the introduction?

OVERVIEW:

1. What is the most intriguing point presented in this essay?
2. What would you say are the essay’s major strengths and why?
3. Should the writer consider reorganizing the essay? Does the sequence of points within the essay lead us step by step toward the central insight?
4. What do you think the writer needs to focus on when he or she begins revising this essay? (You may omit this question if you feel you have answered it in your earlier comments.)
5. Does the writer’s prose serve him or her well? Do you have any general suggestions for next version?