**Assignment 1**

**Concept Map and Essay for Arcadia**

**Introduction**

The play Arcadia is full of references to systems. In some cases discussion of the system drives the action of the play, in others a system is used to create a framework or background that helps us understand a character’s motivations or behavior.

**Assignment**

Your assignment is to select one of the systems introduced in Arcadia and do two things with it.

1. Produce a concept map showing visually your mental model of how the system you have chosen relates to the action or theme of the play
2. Write a short essay of between 500 and 750 words explaining how the system you have chosen is used to advance the progress of the play, communicate meaning or help us understand some aspect of the human condition.

Your goal with both of these artifacts is to explain to your reader how the system you are describing adds meaning to the experience of reading or viewing the play. Particularly with respect to the essay, be sure to support your argument with examples from the text.

Your two deliverables should be complimentary. While there will be redundancy between them, your challenge is to express your meaning in ways appropriate to the different mediums of prose and diagrams.

**Discussion**

To help you think about the challenge, below find a a non-exhaustive list of the systems described explicitly or implicitly in the play. The page numbers in the listings indicate one place in the play where each system is mentioned, but all are referenced in multiple places.

* Thermodynamics, specifically, the concept of entropy, as in Thomasina's statement "You cannot stir things apart (p.5)."
* Newtonian physics, as a deterministic system, as in Septimus's somewhat sarcastic question 'If everything from the furthest planet to the smallest atom of our brain acts according to Newton's law of motion, what becomes of free will (p.5)?'
* Classical mathematical theory, referenced in terms of Fermat's Theorem (p.6).
* Iterated algorithms or fractals as created by Thomasina and described by Valentine ‘She’s feeding the solution back into the equation, and then solving it again. Iteration, you see (p.44).’
* A system of analyzing text algorithmically to determine its source, as in the discussion between Bernard and Valentine (p.19).
* The waltz as the systematic series of movements through time that Thomasina wants to learn (p.80).
* The implicit 'rules' of academic historical and textual analysis that Bernard uses, and abuses (p.53).
* The system of acts and scenes which form the structure of the play itself.
* The system of objects shared between the two time lines in the play (p.15).
* Landscape architecture as a system for communicating changing world view’s, as Hannah states ‘The history of the garden says it all, beautifully (p.27).’

You are free to choose one of these systems or any other that you can identify.

You may want to consult critical writing about Arcadia. Here is a link to one excellent critique: http://ind.pn/9AQzs.

Searching ‘concept maps’ on Google will bring you all sorts of useful information. The Dubberly Design Office has a particularly wonderful set of examples online here: http://www.dubberly.com/concept-maps.

In particular, I strongly recommend that you read the concise essay, Creating Concept Maps (http://www.dubberly.com/concept-maps/creating-concept-maps.html).

Finally, chapter 4 of Dan Brown’s Communicating Design has great practical advice about how to design and present concept maps.

**Submission**

Bring a printed, tabloid sized version of your concept map to class on the day the assignment is due. Be prepared to spend no more than 5 minutes explaining your map to the class.

In addition to the in-class presentation, submit a single PDF document that contains both your concept map and your essay.

**Grading Rubrics**

There are separate rubrics for the diagram and the essay, but this assignment receives one score. In other words, if one turned in only the essay, and even if it was excellent on all criteria, the score for the assignment would be 2.5 ((5 + 0)/2).

**Diagram**

| **Quality** | **Poor (1)** | **Good (2 - 3)** | **Excellent (4)** | **Weight (%)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Graphic Design | Is unattractive in appearance, is difficult to parse visually, does not use layout, scale or position effectively to enhance communication | Has a pleasing appearance, use of typography supports meaning, use layout, scale and postion to enhance meaning, and communicates well the linkages between nodes | Is particularly beautiful, uses advanced effects like color and texture effectively to communicate meaning, and uses visual techniques to produced layered meanings | 15% |
| Information Complexity | Does not clearly distinguish nodes and how they are linked together; it is difficult to understand the conceptual model of the diagram | The conceptual model is clearly communicated via nodes and links, complex relationships are shown, there is some degree of layering of information | The diagram not only has an easy to read layering of information, but also uses visual techniques to make a clear argument by allowing comparisons of different parts of the model or through the use of metaphor | 15% |
| Analytic Utility | Diagram does not explain the system it is meant to illustrate or does not show how the system relates to the play | The diagram makes a clear point about how the system illustrated relates to the action or theme of the play | The diagram not only communicates how the system relates to the action of the play but also subtle relationships between characters, or time or other systems | 20% |

**Essay**

| **Quality** | **Poor (1)** | **Good (3)** | **Excellent (5)** | **Weight (%)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Presentation | Does not meet the requirement for length, is unattractive in appearance, or the typography is in some way makes reading difficult. | Meets length expectations and is attractively formatted. | Is particularly elegant in its use of typography. | 10% |
| Content | The essay does not clearly identify a particular system as a topic, does not offer a clear thesis regarding the relationship between the selected system and the play, does not include examples from the text, or otherwise fails to address the required topic. | The essay clearly identifies a system, shows how it relates to the play as a whole, includes supporting examples drawn from the text for each of its points and can be read as a coherent and organized statement of opinion. | The essay goes beyond the assignment either through the use of additional research or via a particularly insightful analysis of the relationship of the selected system both to the play and human condition in general. | 25% |
| Writing Skill | The essay is poorly written, contains many spelling and/or grammatical errors, is disorganized or otherwise fails to present ideas in a coherent way. | The writing contains minimal typographic errors and the relationships between sentences, paragraphs and the overall structure help the reader understand the essay's meaning. | The writing effortlessly communicates the main points, the use of language is rich and expressive and the document is simply a delight to read. | 15% |