

English 299

Midterm Essay Assignment

Due Monday, March 5.

Five pages, double-spaced, paginated. This assignment also calls for a Works Cited page, which will be graded for adherence to MLA Guidelines. Consult the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers for proper formatting. Don't forget your name and an original title.

Choose one of the options below. With each option, your task is not only to bring a critical text into your discussion of a literary text, but also to assess the merits of the case the critic makes. The critic's interpretation does not replace your own.

Note: if you choose to write on *Hamlet*, follow the same citational procedures with the play's lines that I have asked you to use with poems.

- A.** Use Michael Moon's essay, "The Twenty-Ninth Bather: Identity, Fluidity, Gender, and Sexuality in Section 11 of 'Song of Myself,'" to read a section Walt Whitman's 1855 *Leaves of Grass* other than the one to which his title refers. This option asks you to attend to gender and/or sexuality in Whitman's poem.

- B.** Use Karen Sanchez-Eppler's "To Stand Between: Walt Whitman's Poetics of Merger and Embodiment" to read a passage from the 1855 *Leaves of Grass* other than the passage from "I Sing the Body Electric" her essay analyzes. This option asks you to attend to race in Whitman's poem.

- C.** Apply Ernest Jones' psychoanalytic reading strategy to one of Hamlet's soliloquies. This option asks you to attend to gender and/or sexuality in Shakespeare's play. Alternatively, you might use Jones to launch a reading of social class.

- D.** Perform a feminist analysis of a particular passage in *Hamlet*, using Elaine Showalter's "Representing Ophelia: Women, Madness, and the Responsibilities of Feminist Criticism." This essay asks you attend to gender and/or sexuality in Shakespeare's play.