Essay #2 Directions: Analytical / Evaluative Essay

English 101

Due Date: Three polished rough-draft copies are due on the day listed in the syllabus for peer evaluations. A final draft will be due about a week later.

Length: This essay is to be 5-7 pages in length (if you use a large proportional font, about 1250-1750 words) not counting the Works Cited page.

Format: The essay should be typed or word-processed on high quality paper (no onion-skin paper or semi-transparent bond paper, please). Aim for a professional appearance. The essay should be written in the Modern Language Association format (MLA). You may find it useful to peruse pages 102-14 of Diana Hacker's The Bedford Handbook, 6th edition for discussion of this format. Hacker includes a full example of this format on pages 113-14.

In the upper left-hand corner of the first page, please include the following material flush against the left margin: your name, your teacher's name, the course including or comparison/contrast. Of course, other techniques are welcome in addition to these, and they may be necessary to flesh out the paper. Choose one of the following prompts as the basis of your essay:

Option A: Select a local restaurant, a new novel, a recent movie, or a product available to consumers. Review this restaurant, novel, movie, or product and make a recommendation about it. What are its good points or bad points, its strengths or weaknesses? How does it compare to others of its type? Establish fair and useful criteria to judge the subject. If you analyze a novel or movie, note its genre and intended audience and then modify your assessment accordingly. For instance, it is unfair to give a poor review to a Disney movie for simplistic plots, or to give a poor review to a murder mystery because it contained violence. Likewise, if you critique a restaurant, evaluate it in terms of its intended diner. It would be unfair to criticize a fast-food drive-thru because it offers no selection of white wines.

After typing this material in the upper left-hand side of the first page, you should double-space and center the title of your composition. Be original. Be memorable. Make your title count. Note that the title of your own unpublished essay need not be underlined, italicized, or placed within quotation marks. Follow normal conventions for capitalization. (See Hacker pages 473-74.)

The body of your essay should be double-spaced and left justified rather than fully justified. Maintain one-inch margins all around the essay. On every page including the first, insert a header with your last name and the page number according to MLA format. By viewing "header" on most word-processors, you can set up your document to automatically include such a header on each page.

Reminders: (1) Grammar, mechanics, and neatness count. Because faulty grammar can lead to miscommunication, and sloppiness detracts from the essay's impact, grammar, mechanics, and neatness are in many ways inseparable from content. (2) Since you will probably use a word-processor, remember to use the spell-check but also proofread visually. Your paper should be completely free of spelling errors. (3) I will not accept papers that are not clipped or stapled together. Dog-earing copies together is unacceptable.

Special Directions: (1) Students have a week for revision, proofreading, and editing the rough draft. Therefore, I expect these essays to be free of grammatical errors and typos. (2) This essay is formal in tone. Writers should avoid informalities such as contractions, slang, second person pronouns ("you"), and colloquial speech in favor of a professional tone. (3) Do note, however, that "formal" is not synonymous with "boring." Create a strong opening and strong conclusion.

Essay #2: Analytical / Evaluative Essay

In this essay, the students' purpose is to analyze, critique, and evaluate their topic. The writer will need to define clearly what qualities or traits are suitable criteria for such a critique. The writer will then analyze how the subject meets or fails to meet these markers of excellence, and make a recommendation to the reader regarding the topic. All students will still need a unifying thesis to focus the essay. If students engage in research, they will need to cite their findings according to MLA standards and include a Works Cited page; examples can be downloaded from the class website under the "Research" link or perused in The Bedford Handbook. (Such research may not be necessary, however, if the student is familiar with the subject-matter already.) The student should attempt to incorporate several of the invention techniques we have covered in class by the time of the final due date: exemplification, definition, classification, division, narration, description, process, or comparison/contrast. Of course, other techniques are welcome in addition to these, and they may be necessary to flesh out the paper. Choose one of the following prompts as the basis of your essay:

Option A: Select a local restaurant, a new novel, a recent movie, or a product available to consumers. Review this restaurant, novel, movie, or product and make a recommendation about it. What are its good points or bad points, its strengths or weaknesses? How does it compare to others of its type? Establish fair and useful criteria to judge the subject. If you analyze a novel or movie, note its genre and intended audience and then modify your assessment accordingly. For instance, it is unfair to give a poor review to a Disney movie for simplistic plots, or to give a poor review to a murder mystery because it contained violence. Likewise, if you critique a restaurant, evaluate it in terms of its intended diner. It would be unfair to criticize a fast-food drive-thru because it offers no selection of white wines.

Option B: Select a policy or a service available at Gonzaga University. Examples of policies might be safety regulations or rules about student housing. Examples of services might be the computer labs, athletic facilities, libraries, or layout of specific buildings. Analyze how effective the policy is, i.e., how successful it is in achieving its desired effect, or critique the usefulness of the facility or service. When this analysis is done, make realistic suggestions concerning how to improve the policy or alter the facility. For instance, would purchasing specific equipment or changing particular architectural designs make these facilities more useful, safe, accessible, or cheap? If you give this policy or service a strong review, what particular features should be unchanged in future years to ensure its continued effectiveness? Make a recommendation. You may wish to do research comparing policies or services available at other universities. It might also be useful to research the approximate costs of such equipment or modification, or research what group determines specific policies for this university.