

ENGL 561—Disability in British Literature and Film: Close Reading Essay Assignment

You must write about *a work from this class*.

Option One

Select an argument / idea / thesis from one of the secondary readings focusing on disability studies and use that idea to help explain or interpret representations of disability in **one** work from the class. Your essay will need to summarize, paraphrase, and / or quote parts of the essay in order to explain the argument / idea / thesis you will apply to the novel. Finally, and most importantly, your essay will need to analyze specific passages from the story or film in relation to this point. Though not a requirement, you may also include information from other secondary materials.

Option Two

Characterization depends not only on what is said but how it is said. For example, I began this class by telling you a story/narrative: where I am from, what I am studying, the fact that I love horror movies, etc. Not only did you learn something about me from WHAT I said, but you also hopefully learned something about me by HOW I told the story. The same concept can be applied to characters in fiction. Yes, you learn a great many things about Miss Finch, Oliver Sacks's patients, or Christopher Boone from WHAT they say, but you can also learn a great deal about their different characters from HOW they say what they say. The same idea applies to WHAT and HOW the narrator or another character might say about them. In this option, you will compare and contrast the methods of characterization that two works use in order to convey aspects of disabled characters' personalities. What do the particular techniques that the novel or play employs demonstrate about that character overall? Do the techniques change or shift from the opening pages to the ending pages, indicating some kind of character development? What are the implications of the presence or lack of development? What might the novel or play be saying about the way readers come to know characters with disabilities?

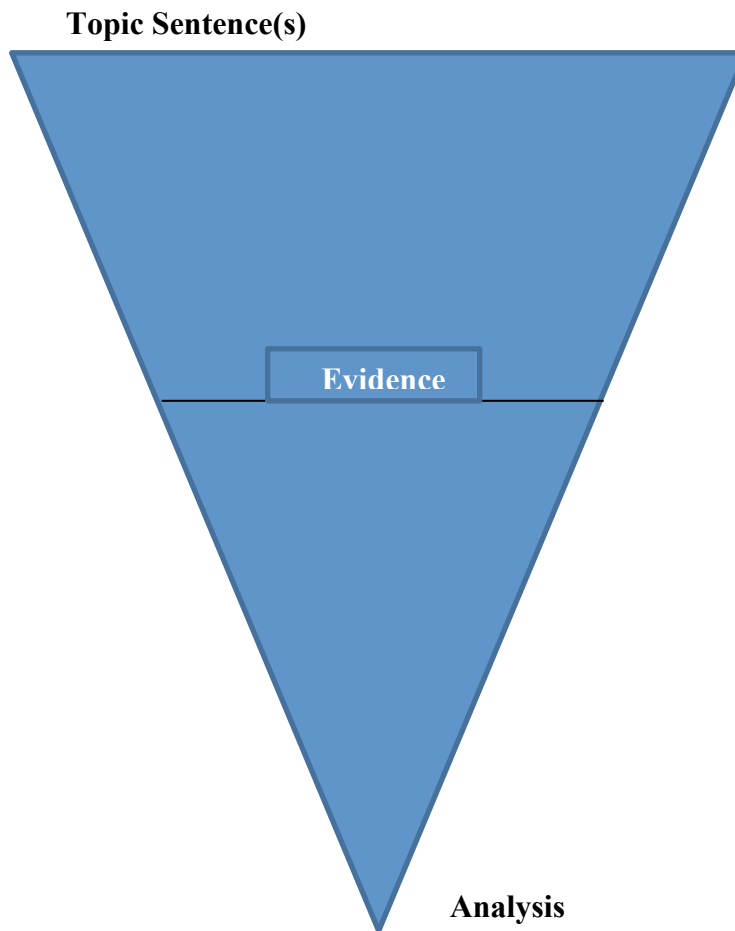
Option Three

You may develop a topic of your choosing related to the theme of the course. Your topic must be approved by me. As in the other options, your essay will need to analyze specific passages from the novel in order to support your argument. Though not a requirement, you may also include information from other secondary materials.

Keep in mind that a response to any of these options should have a thesis. A thesis should answer three questions in one or two sentences: WHAT your argument is, HOW you will be making this argument, and WHY this argument is important (or, as I call it, the SO WHAT question).

Also, make sure to use people first language, in addition to other best practices in discussing people with disabilities.

You will also want to make sure of one thing as you work on any essay for this class: **write analysis and not summary**. In other words, your job is to demonstrate how the object of analysis works by examining its parts, not to retell the essay. On the paragraph level, one way to make sure that you are writing analysis instead of summary is through what I call the Triangle of Analysis. The Triangle of Analysis works for body paragraphs, not introductions or conclusions. Visually, it is represented below:



As you can see, the Triangle of Analysis consists of three distinct parts. First, the **topic sentence(s)** appear at the beginning of the paragraph. The topic sentence(s) should refer back to the thesis statement and make an assertion that supports the thesis statement's argument in some way. Second, the body paragraph should include the presentation of **evidence**; evidence can include statistics, quotations, summaries, paraphrases, pictures, descriptions of scenes, and a wide variety of other kinds of support. Third, a body paragraph will include **analysis** of the evidence; **in other words, how does the evidence that you have presented relate to the topic sentence(s) and, thus, the thesis statement?** Most writers have no problem including the topic sentence(s) or the evidence, but they often lack the analysis. Consequently, those writers who neglect to include the analysis are writing simple summary without presenting a robust and coherent argument. You can use the Triangle of Analysis as a way to check your paragraphs to make sure that you include analysis.

Two words of warning, though. First, **nothing is obvious to your readers; take nothing for granted**. In other words, you should explain all of the connections that you want to make in your essay, even if you think that a connection is simplistic and obvious. Often, the connections are not! Second, **avoid taking the Triangle of Analysis too literally; you will not include one topic sentence, one evidence sentence, and one analysis sentence in a body paragraph**. Often, presenting a piece of evidence or analyzing a quotation or description of a scene from a film will take a number of sentences in order to do it successfully.

Presentation and Due Dates: MLA format, **4 - 5 pages** double-spaced, 12 point font, Times New Roman

Keep in mind that the plagiarism and late policies apply to this assignment. The first essay is due to me through the drop box on Canvas no later than Monday, September, by 11:59 p.m. The second essay is due to me through the drop box on Canvas no later than Friday, October 31, by 11:59 p.m. I am more than happy to review drafts.