

Fall 2004 Essay Sequence
"Reading and Writing Prose: Dissenting Voices"

Essay 1

Kind of Essay: Single text analysis.

Writing focuses for the unit:

- (1) Arguable Thesis that addresses a problem
- (2) Progressive Structure—neither 5 \updownarrow nor chronological

In-class and homework modules before the draft

Skill: Summarizing and quoting for main ideas

- Activities Spotting summaries in sample texts
Writing a summary of the main text and getting feedback
Summarizing again with a focus on their essay's main idea

Skill: Finding hot spots—places that resist or complicate the main message

- Activities Spotting hot spots in sample texts
Identifying these together in class (given a consensus "main message")
Writing about one for homework and getting feedback

Skill: Theses that address a problem: "it may seem as if, but if you look more closely..."

- Activities Spotting theses in sample texts
Writing one in-class close to the draft
Giving feedback to 1 or 2 students as a whole group
Getting feedback in pairs on their theses

Skill: Introductions that proceed: context, problem, implications

- Activities Reading about introductions in *The Craft of Research*
Spotting these in sample texts
Writing a draft introduction at home, giving group and individual feedback

All of these activities foreground writing, but since the students are writing about the texts, every discussion is a discussion of the texts.

Essay 2

Kind of Essay: Controlled Research Essay

Writing focuses for the unit:

- (1) Using theoretical and background evidence
- (2) Using non-written evidence
- (3) Engaging counter-arguments seriously
- (4) Continuation of lessons from Essay 1.

In-class and homework modules before the draft

Skill: Writing about film

- Activities In-class writing about a 15 second clip—feedback and revision
Homework analyzing a short clip—group and individual feedback
Read sample texts that analyze film; expand perceptual vocabulary

Skill: Using secondary sources

- Activities Apply 1-2 sentence excerpts to selected clips in class
View use of secondary sources to bolster and complicate ideas in sample essays
Homework to use 3 sources in one paragraph; group and individual feedback

Skill: Engaging counter-arguments

- Activities View samples that employ counter-arguments in various places
On tentative thesis, get feedback about thorniest counter-evidence

Essay 3

Kind of Essay: Research Essay

Writing focuses for the unit:

- (1) Finding appropriate primary & secondary sources
- (2) Establishing context with multiple sources
- (3) Weaving primary & secondary sources in an argument
- (4) Structure lessons: forecasting, signposting, and stitching

In-class and homework modules before the draft

Skill: Selecting sources

- Activities Analyze source pool in three sample essays
Pool resources with students on similar inquiries
Draft an annotated bibliography—group and individual feedback

Skill: Grouping primary sources

- Activities Analyze primary source work in sample essays
Draft a 2-paragraph overview of the context—group and individual feedback
Class work modeling with a sample topic

Skill: Weaving primary & secondary sources

- Activities Analyze source employment in sample essays
In-class writing: “with” and “against” secondary sources
Assignment advice: secondary source in each major section

Skill: Structure lessons—forecasting, signposting, and stitching

- Activities Analyze structural elements in sample essays
Practice structure components with sample topic: Mad Libs style