

### E28C Essay 1: Close Reading

Close reading is the foundation of any compelling argument about a literary text. Accordingly, the first paper in E28C will build close reading skills. In this essay, you will focus on one passage in *The Castle of Otranto* paying close attention to elements of form and content such as diction, symbols, narrative tone, punctuation, syntax, pacing and rhetorical devices. Just as we've done in class, you must carefully analyze how the language of your passage reveals the larger concerns of the text. Although you will be writing about a single short passage, your essay must nonetheless feature a thesis that you support with textual evidence from that passage.

#### GUIDELINES:

- 1) Choose one passage of **around 20 consecutive lines** from *Otranto*. Pick your passage carefully based on what you are able to pull out of it (some passages will be better suited to close reading than others).
- 2) Your thesis must **present a specific argument about your chosen passage**. Avoid paraphrasing the passage or merely making observations about it; you must both **identify** significant elements of the passage and **make a case** about why they are important (i.e. understanding how some elements work in your passage is necessary to understanding how a character, place, or theme works in the text as a whole)
- 3) To support your argument, **you must quote directly from the text**. Be sure to analyze your quotations and connect them to your larger argument.
- 4) Do not simply replicate classroom discussions in your paper. While you may use ideas from class as a starting point, your essay must demonstrate original analysis of the text. As a result, you should **avoid choosing a passage we have discussed at length**, unless you first meet with me to ensure that you are bringing a different approach to the passage.
- 5) For more ideas about elements to analyze in the poem, use the handout "12 Step Guide to Close Reading Fiction," which is available on Essays tab of the course website.
- 6) With your draft, you must **submit a passage annotation as a hard copy in class**. See Essays tab on the course website for further details.

#### TECHNICALITIES:

- 1) Length is **2-3 pages**. Papers should have 1" margins, double-spacing, 12-pt Times New Roman font, and page numbers. Include a heading with your name, my name, the course, and the date. Review MLA format with the "Academic Essay Formatting and Writing Guide" on our course website.
- 2) Papers should have an academic title ("Essay Number 1" does not cut it!) – See the Academic Title PPT for ideas.
- 3) This is a short paper, so skip straight to the good stuff—you don't need an introductory or concluding paragraph. Instead, start with your thesis and move right into your supporting evidence. Conclude your paper by adding one last sentence that sums up the implications of the argument you've just made (why is it important that we understand this passage?) The paper should, however, have multiple well-defined paragraphs with clear transitions.
- 4) As the syllabus states, the final draft should be submitted by classtime on the due date as a hard copy brought to class **and as a word document to [turnitin.com](http://turnitin.com)**. Same for the rough draft, with the addition of the passage annotation as a hard copy in class.