

Major Essay First Draft and Response

Instructions

At least by the end of the week after our course's essay proposals are discussed, I will provide a form that lists the respective essay titles that have been proposed and allows you to select the person to whose essay you would like to respond. You will then sign up on a first-come, first-served basis for the person to whose essay you would most like to respond later in the term. As with your own essay, the topic of the essay you elect to review may change somewhat from the original version.

Major Essay First Drafts

These "first" essay drafts must be essentially final and ready to submit for a grade. Especially rough or incomplete first drafts will negatively impact your grade for your draft's presentation. Late submission of your first draft will accrue a corresponding late penalty on your response to your classmate's first draft.

Major Essay First Draft Responses

You will present your response to your classmate's essay draft in the designated live seminar meeting. At times, when you are reviewing the work of another scholar, it may be professionally courteous to send your work to that scholar for input or perusal before you present or publish it (e.g., to correct anything that appears to the reviewee to be mischaracterizations on your part). For this class's purposes, you are not prohibited from sending your response to your reviewee ahead of time if you really think it preferable, but you are generally discouraged from doing so. Part of the value of the presentation assignment as described below is practicing competent, spur-of-the-moment discussion of one's research with other scholars.

Your response should be 1500 words. Approximately 25% of your response should summarize your classmate's essay draft.

Approximately 75% of your response should develop your own assessment of the draft. You can acknowledge points of agreement that you have with the essay, but your focus should be on collegially posing additional questions, making suggestions, identifying alternative lines of thought, or commenting on other ways of improving or extending the draft's argument. Especially this portion of your response should use the number and types of primary and scholarly secondary sources that will best help substantiate the assessment you are providing of the draft. But at a minimum, the response must include at least one source in its bibliography. Citation of the essay to which a response is being made does not count toward the required minimum citation or bibliography requirements.

For this assignment's purposes, respondents should not identify the essay's errors in formatting, style, or mechanics unless these are severe enough to impinge on the essay's intelligibility. Throughout your review of your classmate, you should maintain a cordial, gracious tone, and your suggestions for improving the essay should be offered in a constructive spirit of edification

and helpfulness. You should not simply affirm all that your classmate has done. But you should describe areas of improvement honestly and in the same tone that you would want your own work to be reviewed.

For details of when you must submit (a) your own essay draft and (b) your response to your classmate's essay draft, please see the course syllabus.

If the classmate to whose essay you have been assigned to provide a response has not submitted an essay draft by the draft deadline indicated in the syllabus, please see [our course's extension policy](#) for instructions on how to proceed.

Rubric

Responses will be graded according to the following rubric:

- (30%) Summary
 - (5%) Introduction: How clearly and compellingly does the response introduce the essay it is assessing? How well should the response's audience be able to discern why they should care about the essay under review?
 - (5%) Thesis: How clearly and correctly does the response identify the essay's thesis?
 - (20%) Digest: How clearly and thoroughly does the response digest the essay's argument for its thesis? Does the response provide specific details in its summary or discuss the essay only very generally? How well does the response summarize the essay's argument in a way that will the point(s) made in the response's assessment of the essay?
- (50%) Assessment
 - (10%) Thesis: How clear, definite, and defensible is the response's statement of its own thesis about the essay under review?
 - (30%) Argument: How well does the response's argument demonstrate its stated thesis?
 - (10%) Conclusion: How well does the response bring closure to the argument as a whole? How fitting is the conclusion for the topic and nature of the essay under discussion?
- (5%) Bibliography: Does the review use at least the required number of scholarly sources? Does the review cite the scholarly sources appropriate to its argument in appropriate places in that argument? Does the review show thoughtful interaction with sources of differing opinions?
- (15%) Style: How accurately and thoroughly does the response apply proper formatting style and mechanics?
- Lateness: -0–100% according to [this policy](#)
- Length: -0–100% according to [this policy](#) and the length specified in the response instructions