ENGLISH 408: Reader Response
Research Project Assignment
kk, Fall 2017

THE BIG PICTURE

In this three part assignment, you will
1. propose an idea for your research project;
2. design a method for collecting and analyzing five reader responses in a way that meaningfully develops that idea;
3. craft a 10-pp. (minimum) critical paper. See details below.

SPECIFIC COMPONENTS

1. Proposal (5% of course grade; due to D2L by 5 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 3)
The proposal should consist of 2-3 pages (typed, double-spaced) that address the following questions:
   a. What reader-oriented idea have you chosen to explore, and how are you going to narrow its scope?
      On what primary text will your analysis focus, and why?
   b. Tentatively, what would you like to argue in the paper? Suggest a potential thesis.
   c. How do you plan on collecting reader responses?
      a. What questions would you like to ask, and why?
      b. What method of presentation (i.e., questionnaire, survey, interview) will you use, and why?
      c. What is your tentative plan for collecting responses? i.e., who will you ask to respond, and when? What prior knowledge, if any, will your readers need?
   d. What other sources do you plan on consulting? List these in a Works Consulted section at the end of your proposal. For now, aim to include two scholarly sources and one non-scholarly one. You do not need to annotate these sources; just list them.

Grading for Proposal:
The proposal will be evaluated on the following ten-point scale:
Content (5 points)
- Do you provide thoughtful answers to the assignment questions? (see a-d above)
  - Topic/narrowing of focus/identification of primary texts? (1 pt)
  - Tentative thesis? (3 pt)
  - Tentative method & organizational plan (1 pt)

Sources (3 points)
- Do you attach a Works Consulted page that lists one primary source at least 2 potential scholarly secondary sources? Are these sources credible?

Format & Grammar (2 points)
- Do the proposal and working bibliography adhere to MLA format and documentation style?
  Are they typed in 12-pt. font, w/ 1” margins? Is your document free from mechanical and grammatical errors?

2. Reader Response Summary and Analysis (10% of grade; due to D2L by noon on Tues., Nov. 21)
For this part of the project, you will write a 4-5-page paper that
   a. summarizes your method of reader response collection: what did you do and why?
   b. analyzes the specific responses you collected: what trends did you find? Which responses were useful, and why? Which were not, and why? What limits did you encounter—i.e., what problems
arise in this type of research? How did this exercise deepen your understanding of your project, of 21st-century reading processes, and/or of 21st-century readers’ perceptions of your text and what it represents?

c. includes a copy of the question/s you asked readers; you can count these toward the page limit for this assignment

Grading for Reader Response Summary & Analysis:
I will use the following system to evaluate the Reader Response Summary & Analysis:

A or A-

The paper was turned in on time and meets the suggested length requirement. It addresses all of the above-listed questions with purposeful reference to specific reader responses and other course concepts, if relevant. The writer includes a copy of specific questions or a description of methods used to interact with readers. The paper is clearly written and grammatically proficient. There is evidence of critical thinking.

B+, B, or B-

The paper addresses all of the above-listed questions with occasional, generally purposeful reference to specific reader responses and other course concepts where relevant. The writer includes a copy of specific questions or a description of methods used to interact with readers. Generally, the paper is clearly written and grammatically proficient. There is evidence of critical thinking.

C+, C, or C-

The paper addresses most of the above questions, but its description and analysis of reader responses are vague and insufficiently developed. As a result, the paper lacks purpose and examines reader responses only on a surface level. Its writing requires substantial editing for clarity.

D+, D, or D-

The paper does not sufficiently address the above questions, nor does it engage meaningfully with specific reader responses. Its composition exhibits undue errors that detract heavily from its reader’s comprehension.

3. The Paper (20% of course grade; due to D2L by midnight Sunday, Dec. 3)
This 10-page (minimum) paper should offer the following, not necessarily in this order:

a. a critical analysis of your idea;

b. an interpretive argument of one literary text of your choice

c. a discussion of past and present readers’ responses to that text, as those responses inform your argument

d. an integration of a mix of 3-5 traditional (i.e., scholarly) and 2-3 non-traditional (e.g., reader responses, goodreads, amazon.com reviews) sources for support. That means you need a minimum of 5 total secondary sources for this paper. NOTE: For the purposes of this paper, the responses you collect for #2 above count as a single non-traditional source. Your primary (literature/film) source is additional.

Please see the next page for the rubric I will use to evaluate the long paper.
ENG 408 Research Project Paper Rubric
Kalata, Fall 2017

INSTRUCTIONS: This document is meant to be read in conjunction with the graded Research paper assignment uploaded to D2L. I’ll write or type notes in the margins below. Any p. #s I note will correspond to your paper’s page numbers and/or paragraphs. The check system works as follows:

+ = paper performs skill set on an approximate A level
✓ = paper performs skill set on an approximate B level
✓- = paper performs skill set on an approximate C level
– = paper performs skill set on a D/F level

1. CONTENT:
   a. Does the essay express a clear, sufficiently narrow thesis that is both arguable and insightful? i.e., does the thesis avoid the obvious?
   b. Does the paper explore thoughtful, analytical questions of “how” or “why”?
   c. Is the thesis developed by the purposeful incorporation of carefully selected, credible source material, including five readers’ responses to your chosen text?
   d. Does your voice—as opposed to the voice of other writers/scholars—control the essay, from start to finish? Do you express authority over the essay’s main ideas?
   e. Does the essay meet basic assignment requirements?

2. ORGANIZATION:
   a. Are the essay’s paragraphs solid? i.e., do they develop analysis of the text by offering related, yet distinctly different points that connect to your thesis?
   b. Do paragraphs begin with strong topic sentences that generally avoid quoting and are grounded in analysis, as opposed to surface-level observation?
   c. Are transitions present between and within paragraphs? Do you introduce all quotations with transitional phrases to connect them clearly to your argument?
   d. Do the essay’s ideas & supporting points progress logically and purposefully?

3. STYLE:
   a. Are your sentences clear, complete, and varied?
   b. Is your word choice clear, accurate, and thoughtful?
   c. Is your wording concise? Does it generally avoid the passive voice?
   d. Is your tone appropriately formal for an academic paper?

4. MECHANICS:
   a. Have you proofread the essay for sentence-level errors (run-ons, fragments, etc.)?
   b. Have you used commas correctly?
   c. Does your essay exhibit other punctuation errors? (apostrophes, semi-colons, etc.)
   d. Do you strive for parallelism in your phrases and sentence structures?

5. FORMAT & DOCUMENTATION:
   a. Have you correctly cited in MLA style all sources whose ideas you use in any way? (recall that summaries, paraphrases, and direct quotes ALL need cited)
   b. Are your in-text parenthetical citations correctly punctuated?
   c. Do parenthetical citations correspond correctly to Works Cited entries?
   d. Is your paper typed in MLA style, with the appropriate heading, p. #s, & 1” margins?

GRADE: _____________________