

Paper to be turned in no later than class time on Tuesday, April 14.

For this assignment, worth 20% of your course grade, you will write a thoughtful and substantial, 4-6 page argumentative essay of textual analysis. Your thesis and your argument should address a narrowly defined area of inquiry that allows you to explore the significance of at least two intersecting concepts in the text(s) you choose: justice, faith, and equality. This is not a research assignment; you should be able to write this essay from your reading, your notes, and your intellect. If you do consult any sources as you prepare your paper, even if you use them only as conceptual background, you must include them with proper MLA citations.

You might choose to write about any of the material we have covered since the midterm. You might consider more than one text (particularly if you choose to write about a short story, given the target length of this assignment). As long as one text on which you focus is from the syllabus after the midterm, your second or even third text might be either from the first half of the course or it might be a text not addressed on the syllabus. Make sure any pairings you make will allow you to write a balanced and coherent essay.

Your argument should offer an interpretation of the theme(s) of your text(s) in regard to the conceptual terms you've chosen. So, for example, if you wish to talk about *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, you might consider the ways in which justice and religion intersect in that novel. Perhaps you're a fan of the current version of the show *Battlestar Galactica*, and have noticed how religious beliefs motivate a particular form of justice that is acted out by Cylons against humans. Your paper might consider the various ways in which religious belief is depicted as a force that guides the definition of and enactment of social justice in Dick's novel and in the TV show. Your essay would make an interpretive claim (your thesis) and then support it with a carefully structured argument supported by references to the text and made clear through explicit explanations of how those references support your thesis.

Because a strong thesis is critical to your success, I will ask you to bring in to class, on Tuesday, April 7, a typed working thesis, and then to immediately improve upon that thesis and blog your revised thesis by Wednesday, April 8. Please see the handout on the wiki regarding topics and theses. Remember that your thesis must be both argumentative and thematically analytical. Your task is to demonstrate the **significance** of the observations you have made in your close reading of the texts (i.e. your essay must answer that "WHY?" question as well as the all-important question, "So what?"). Be sure that your thesis sets you up for precisely that purpose.

In your essay, I will expect and grade for:

- a thorough investigation of the thematic terms (whichever you've chosen, justice, faith, and/or equality)
- an intelligent, original, thoughtful examination of the texts you're discussing, with lots of detail, explicit analysis, and evidence to support your argument.
- an introduction with a strong, arguable thesis (see the sample below) based on your close reading and personal interpretation, and a clear indication of how you intend to support that thesis.
- an argument rather than an observation, synopsis or summary - a strong thesis will allow you to avoid these common pitfalls.
- logical, coherent, unified paragraphs with topic sentences as you develop and explain your thesis.
- a developed conclusion which reinforces the thesis and which defends your opinion.
- a carefully proofread essay with grammatical sentences and correct punctuation, as well as correct usage and spelling.

Physical guidelines for the paper: Do not use a cover page. The essay must be printed; the margins should not exceed 1.25 inches on any side; use a standard 12-point font. At the top of page one, indicate your name, the course number, and the date, with a single return between each item. Include a title for your essay, and center it above the body of the essay. Do not use the title of the text as your essay's title. Do not quote, italicize or underline your own title. Double space the essay; do not insert double returns between paragraphs. Staple your paper in the upper left before you come to class. Do not staple blank pages to your essay.

Please see the syllabus for my policies on late work, extensions, revision, and plagiarism.

Typed working thesis due: Tuesday, April 7

Blogged revised thesis due: WEDNESDAY, April 8 (Please note the 24-hour deadline)

Paper due: Tuesday, April 14