

Essay IV Assignment

Researched Position Paper, as an Oral Presentation with a Slideshow

10-12 minutes (probably about 5-6 double-spaced pages, but the time is what matters)

Claim and Impact: Answer a question identified by an *academic source* about the interpretation of a story, speech, or poem, **or propose a solution to a problem** identified by an *academic source* about the interpretation of a story, speech, or poem.

- You have two options:
 - *Option one* (like Essays II and III): Identify a debate between academic sources (who answer the same question differently) and **argue for one side against the other or propose another answer to the same question.**
 - *Option two*: Identify a question or problem which one or more academic sources point out, argue that the sources which point out the question or problem do not provide a complete/adequate answer or solution, and **propose your own answer or solution.** (Talk to me if you want to choose this option.)
- **Impact:** Whichever option you choose, **emphasize what you are adding** that none of your sources provides (more evidence/arguments for an existing interpretation, a new compromise between existing interpretations, a new answer to an existing question, etc.).
- As always, your claim should be **clear, focused** (specific enough to be well covered in your presentation), **appropriately complex** (the result of analysis, not merely easily-found factual material), and **arguable** (someone might plausibly disagree, whether because of a different perspective or lack of information).

Argument and Evidence: Although you need to connect your own interpretation to the questions and debates of your academic sources, **your emphasis should be on your own interpretation and the details in the story/poem that support your interpretation.**

- Support all of your statements and interpretations with evidence: **specific details in the story/poem.**
- **Each point you make** (this will often correspond to a paragraph in writing and to a slide in your slideshow) should be **stated explicitly** and should **clearly support your claim/thesis.**
- Stay on topic: **All of your support/evidence for your point** (which may come before or after you state it, corresponding to the other sentences in a paragraph, or other material on the same slide) **supports that point**, and you make it clear how it does so.
- Use your **introduction** to give necessary background and to give a preview of your argument. Use your **conclusion** to review your major points and point to the significance of your argument.
- You can use **traditional argumentation** (like Essay II), including supporting arguments and counterarguments to opposed positions, **and/or Rogerian argumentation**, including appeals to common ground and analysis of conditional validity.

Sources: Cite academic and/or primary sources.

- Cite a total of **at least three academic/primary sources** in addition to the story/poem.
- Cite **at least one academic/primary source which I did not provide** on the “Literature & Criticism” page on Canvas.

- For a reminder of what counts as an academic source or primary source, see Canvas: Files: General resources / SourceTypes.pdf (I also recommend checking any self-selected sources with me.)
- In an oral presentation with a slideshow, “citing” means that you (1) **mention the source aloud** in your oral presentation **and** (2) **include a full citation** on a Works Cited slide at the end.

Oral presentation:

- Length: **stick to the time limit**. Like our class, conferences have limited time, and going over your limit may mean limiting time for audience questions or even cutting into other speakers’ time. The lower limit tends to be less strict, but a very short presentation may come across as inadequate.
- It is recommended that you **read your oral presentation**. Different disciplines have different expectations, but for the study of literature, reading a speech verbatim is standard because exact wording is especially important. (If you choose to work from note cards or memory, make sure you have quotations written out, and make sure to practice harder so that you come across as articulate and unhesitating.)
- **Make yourself clear. Write clearly:** use correct grammar and a straightforward sentence structure that is easy to follow in a speech. **Speak clearly:** enunciate, speak slowly and smoothly, using appropriate emphasis.
- **Be prepared.** The more you revise your text and your presentation, and the more you practice delivering your presentation, the more smoothly you will be able to do it.
- **Use your physical presence.** Your voice, your posture, and your gestures are an ethos argument—be aware of these things and present yourself as competent and trustworthy.
- **Make eye contact.** Even though you will probably be reading your presentation, practice until you can look up every few sentences while reading.

Slideshow:

- Use **Powerpoint** or **Prezi** (for Prezi, I recommend the free student account, “Edu Enjoy,” <https://prezi.com/pricing/edu/>).
- **Line up your slides with your oral presentation.** In general, you want a slide for each point that you make.
- **Do not overload your slides.** Putting too much on one slide can overwhelm your audience and distract from your oral presentation.
- Ideally, **everything in the slideshow should support your argument—including images**. For example, a book illustration or a still from a movie adaptation could depict an event in a story which is an example that proves your point. A map could show how close different locations in a story/poem are to one another. A chart could show how often a word is repeated.
- The slideshow should **look orderly and professional**.
- Use **correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar** in the text on your slides.
- Use **correct citation style (MLA) for evidence and images** (including Works Cited on last slide/frame).