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**First Year Writing (FYW) Committee – Spring 2018**

**English 110/Creativity**

**Essay Assignments for a Three Essay Sequence**

**Note:** The readings in the assignments by Ruszkiewicz, Atwood, Kaufman, Bohm and Lightman are available as PDFs. Other readings are available through links.

**ESSAY ASSIGNMENTS FOR A THREE ESSAY SEQUENCE**

**Essay 1: Rhetorical Analysis**

In this assignment, you will have the opportunity to build an argument based on a close reading of the essay “Nine Beginnings” by Margaret Atwood. Your assignment is to write an analysis that can help to unlock or unpack Atwood’s essay and discover what she’s trying to do or say. You can do this by addressing one or a combination of several key questions, such as:

Why does she structure the essay as she does?

Does she answer the question that is the basis of her essay, “Why do you write?”

What does her essay say or imply about creativity?

**In this essay, you will**

* Identify an issue or area of tension within the reading that is worth addressing
* Formulate an arguable thesis while synthesizing ideas from the reading
* Use internal evidence from and analyze the reading to support your thesis
* Structure your essay with the use of transitions to move from one point to the next
* Develop a conclusion that reflects rather than summarizes

**Readings for this assignment:**

Atwood, Margaret. “Nine Beginnings”

Harvey, Gordon. “Elements of the Academic Essay”

Ruszkiewicz, John J. *A Reader’s Guide to College Writing.* Bedford 2014, especially Ch. 6, “Critical Reading” and Ch.13, “Make a Point”

**Essay 2: Lens Analysis**

For this assignment, you will continue your practice of close reading by discovering the relationship between two essays that address different aspects of creativity. Specifically, you will use James Kaufman’s “Theories of Creativity” as a lens to evaluate/analyze “The Fifty Greatest Breakthroughs Since the Wheel” by James Fallows, noting what Kaufman’s essay (the “lens text”) reveals about ideas presented by Fallows (the “target text”). Some of Fallows’ ideas that Kaufman can help to analyze include the functional categories of innovation, the possibility that innovation is slowing down, the methodology behind the list and the list itself.

**In this essay, you will**

* Continue the goals of the first assignment
* Orient the reader as to the relationship between the readings and identify key terms as necessary
* Conclude by addressing “so what” or by “drawing out an *implication* of the wider significance of the argument” (Harvey - #9)
* Use MLA format to create a Works Cited list

**Readings for this assignment:**

Fallows, James. “The 50 Greatest Breakthroughs Since the Wheel.” *The Atlantic*, Atlantic Media Company. Nov.2013. <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2013/11/innovations-list/309536/>

Kaufman, James. “Theories of Creativity” from *Creativity 101*, 2nd ed. Springer 2016

Harvey, Gordon. “Elements of the Academic Essay”

Ruszkiewicz, John J.*A Reader’s Guide to College Writing.* Bedford 2014, especially Ch. 6, “Critical Reading” and Ch.11 “Discuss”

**Essay 3: Researched Argument**

Choose a current controversial issue involving creativity about which you can take a position and construct an argument. Some of these controversies have emerged from our reading, for example, whether or not we are entering a period of less innovation. Some other possibilities include:

Whether or not smartphones enhance or diminish creativity (how/why)

Whether or not creativity can be taught to children and should be included on a school curriculum

Whether or not A.I. can be creative

Whether or not incremental creativity represents “true” creativity

Whether our persistent use of technology undermines the opportunity to be creative

Whether or not creativity needs an ethical component

**In this essay, you will**

* Continue the goals of the first two assignments
* Use framing devices for sources in order to introduce and incorporate them into the essay
* Evaluate the claims made by the sources and contextualize them in relationship to the argument

**Readings for this assignment:**

Harvey, Gordon. “Elements of the Academic Essay”

Ruszkiewicz, John J.*A Reader’s Guide to College Writing.* Bedford 2014, especially Ch. 6 “Critical Reading,” Ch.15 “Evidence,” Ch.16 “Frame Ideas and Quotations,” Ch.14 “Structure” and Ch.9 “Dispute, Concede, and Rebut”

Bohm, David. *On Creativity* (selection)

Kaufman, James. “Is Creativity a Good Thing or a Bad Thing?” from *Creativity 101*, 2nd ed. Springer 2016

Lightman, Alan. *In Praise of Wasting Time* (selection) Simon & Schuster/ TED (May 15, 2018)