

Mash-Up/Mixed-Paper Final Project

engl 250 / sec. B / autumn quarter 2008-09 / chang



Think back to the questions asked at the beginning of the quarter: What is the American imagination? Why do we read literature? How do we read and understand American literature? In what ways does literature reveal, critique, or complicate our selves, our culture, our world? We have read a wide range of texts, across time and geography and form, which take up different arguments, experiences, themes, and ideals. With the above questions in mind, consider further questions: What similarities do the readings share? What are their differences? Why are these similarities and differences important? How do they help us answer the questions above? Moreover, what kinds of evidence, details, and texts might you draw on to answer the questions above?

Mix and Mash

For this assignment, we will borrow and use the “mash-up” and the “mix” from the domains of computers, media, and music in order to imagine and produce a unique kind of writing project. The “mash-up” is the combining, blending, and layering of different texts, sources, even genres to produce a ‘new’ text (sampling, heavy metal mashed with pop, *Harry Potter* and *The Sound of Music*, a grocery list as poem). The “mix” is the selecting and arranging of texts to produce a collection, usually organized around some theme or feature or narrative (80s mixes, dance mixes, road trip mixes). The best mixes and mashes have a central idea, argument, or goal in mind.

Your final project is both a mix and a mash: You will 1) **identify** a critical question, claim, or concept that will frame and organize your project; 2) write an **introduction**, a kind of prologue to the project explaining your overall goals, in one single-spaced page or less; 3) **select** and **revise** and order **four** of your Critical Response Papers (including your Critical Review) which fit, explore, or support your organizing analytic; 4) **include** between each part of the project a **combination** of image, verse, or quote from the readings or outside research that provides transition and furthers your analytical ‘story’; 5) write a **conclusion**, a kind of epilogue to the project, in one single-spaced page or less.

In other words, you will combine, layer, and arrange your writing, outside writing, verse, and image into a portfolio, a “mixed-paper” that makes an argument about the readings, the goals of the class, or the ways literature reveals something about culture and the world we live in. For example, the pieces of your “mixed-paper” need to be chosen, revised, and arranged to reveal, respond to, and analyze a literary or rhetorical feature (like metaphor or irony), a cultural or political issue (like gender, race, sexuality, power), or to engage the overarching questions of the class (like what is worldmaking and why is it important?).

The most successful “mixed-papers” will have a clear frame, a specific critical question or **organizing analytic**, which translates to a telling and concrete introduction and conclusion. Successful “mixed-papers” will also pick the best Critical Responses that fit the scope and goals of the introduction and conclusion. Successful “mixed-papers” will demonstrate **strong transitions** from one piece to the next as well as an overall coherence and cohesion. All of the pieces must make sense individually and all together; there must be rhyme or reason for the inclusion of a response paper, an image, a verse, or a quote. The least successful “mixed-papers” have no guiding principle or goal, fail to tell an analytic ‘story’, and include a text or image only as summary or illustration.

Guidelines and Due Dates

Format: 9-11 pages, including 4 formal Critical Response Papers, at least 3 transition pieces, introduction page, conclusion page, and bibliography if necessary

Due: Monday, December 8