

# ENG 2010 Critical Reflection #1: Weeks 1-3

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Over the course of the term, you will have four opportunities to complete a Critical Reflection, which invite you to engage with the course readings, theories, terms, and ideas. Critical Reflections will be due (approximately) at the end of Week 3, Week 7, Week 11, and Week 15. You must complete any **two** of the opportunities. Critical Reflections will be cumulative and based on the texts, in-class discussions, lectures, and Blackboard responses.

## Goals and Outcomes

The Critical Reflection is in two parts. First, a **2-3 page analytical response**, which asks you to develop a specific intervention, to close read, and to integrate scholarly support in a thoughtful, sustained way. Second, you will write a **brief 2-3 page reflection** and metacognitive assessment of what you have learned thus far in the course including a self-assessment of your work. Both essays require you to demonstrate your understanding and engagement with the course goals, concepts, and readings. Consider the range of literary and scholarly texts you have read thus far in the course, drawing on key terms like genre, form, fiction, nonfiction, gender, race, sexuality, ability, queer, and so on. Finally, keep in mind the framing questions and lines of inquiry of the course.

## Part I: Critical Analysis

For this first part, select **one** of the short stories (e.g. “The Book of the Grotesque,” “Hands,” “The Garden of Forking Paths,” “The Lottery”) or a **section** of the longer text (e.g. *Borderlands/La Frontera*) we have discussed thus far in the term (i.e. weeks 1-3); the text(s) you pick cannot be one that you have written on previously for a Critical Reflection. Then, **identify** a key term or concept or theoretical intervention from the course that the narrative text(s) addresses, critiques, or reimagines. Write a 2-3 page analytical response that articulates the connections or complications between your narrative text(s) and your term or concept, drawing on the secondary readings for support. **Foreground a close reading analysis of the text(s)**. No outside research is necessary. For example, consider one of the following (or develop an argument and analysis of your own, perhaps drawing focus and inspiration from the weeks’ presentation critical questions):

- How does your text(s) define or complicate the definitions of “**genre**” and/or “**form**”? Or, how does the text use the genre conventions (or disrupt those conventions) to make an argument about a key issue or idea? Why is this definition and reading important to understand?
- How does your text(s) define or complicate the definitions of “**fiction**”? Or, how does the text use the genre conventions (or disrupt those conventions) to make an argument about a key issue or idea? Why is this definition and reading important to understand?
- How does your text(s) define or complicate the definitions of “**realism**”? Or, how does the text use the genre conventions (or disrupt those conventions) to make an argument about a key issue or idea? Why is this definition and reading important to understand?
- How does your text(s) define or complicate “**gender**”? Why is this definition and reading important to understand?
- Using another key term, close read and analyze the narrative(s) to argue how and why the text offers a critique or intervention. Why is that important to understand?

**Do not just answer the above questions like a laundry list.** Your argument must be specific, focused, and supported by **close reading** details. You must use the assigned academic readings as research to help you write your essay and demonstrate what you have thought about during the past few weeks of the semester. You must integrate at least **one** scholarly reading. Your essays must do more than simply describe or summarize your text, list or observe examples, or respond personally or thematically; do more than just discuss plot and character. For example, **avoid** just listing sample passages where you notice examples of *gender* in “The Lottery,” which is descriptive, summary, and not analysis. However, try using “The Lottery” to think about the ways the short story critiques *normative femininity*, which requires argument, evidence, and theoretical support.

Outstanding essays have a **clear claim**, use and **integrate evidence** and theoretical support effectively and selectively, and engage one or two of the main lines of inquiry for the course. You **must** close read, which means paying close attention to particular details, moments, scenes, and passages from the narrative text. Outstanding essays do more than point to examples or similarities between texts. Outstanding essays make a focused, intertextual argument and use close analysis to show how the course concepts illuminate the texts at hand. Outstanding essays demonstrate a working understanding of the scholarship.

## Part II: Reflection

For this second essay, in 2-3 pages, you will **reflect** on the past few weeks. Metacognitively—thinking about your own thinking and learning--address and assess your own engagement with what you have read, thought about, and learned thus far in the course. You might reflect on the **course goals and outcomes**; you might use the language of the **grading rubric** in the course policies. Reflections need to include in some way:

- a self-assessment of your own work and process, citing specific examples including the above analytical essay, previous Critical Reflections, your presentation, your responses on Blackboard
- a self-assessment of your class participation and process, citing specific examples from in-class discussion, Blackboard discussion, and other ways you have engaged the course
- connected to the self-assessment, discuss one thing that you will take away from the class (thus far), something that you can transfer to other classes, or one way the class has improved your reading, writing, or critical thinking
- **finally**, given all of the evidence in your reflection, **assign yourself a combined grade** (e.g. A-, B, C+) for the Critical Reflection and your participation in the last few weeks

Outstanding reflections **identify** clear outcomes or understandings gained from the course, use and integrate specific evidence from the class, and do more than just describe what you did. Outstanding essays address why what you did is important to you and what you learned or accomplished. You may use first person for this personal response, and though less formal than the first part of the exam, you should be mindful of rhetorical context, audience, tone, and overall purpose.

Overall, the philosophy for the Critical Reflection is the idea that you will develop and become the best judge for what you have learned and struggled with, what you have explored and discovered, and what your goals you have for the course and if you met them. These thinking and writing opportunities give you space to really reflect on the past few weeks to narrate for yourself (and to your instructor) what you have done, could do better, and why you are in the course in the first place—is not that heart of a well-rounded education? If your self-assessment and self-assigned grade is well supported, then the grade stands. However, if the instructor determines the grade should be changed (either higher or lower), you will receive feedback and rationale for the change.

## Guidelines and Due Dates

**Format:** Semi-formal, academic papers for an audience of your class, 2-3 pages each  
Use 12-point Times New Roman, 1" margins, standard double-spacing, name block, page numbers, use subheadings to title each essay/section  
MLA citations and one combined bibliography at the end of the paper

**CR#1 Due:** Monday, January 31, by 11:59 PM, uploaded as a Word document to Blackboard:  
[https://blackboard.ohio.edu/webapps/assignment/uploadAssignment?content\\_id=12815403\\_1&course\\_id=590139\\_1&group\\_id=&mode=cpview](https://blackboard.ohio.edu/webapps/assignment/uploadAssignment?content_id=12815403_1&course_id=590139_1&group_id=&mode=cpview)  
on weeks 1-3, one of the short stories or a section of *Borderlands/La Frontera*  
(remember that you must complete at 2 of the 4 Critical Reflection opportunities)

**CR#2 Due:** Monday, February 28, by 11:59 PM

**CR#3 Due:** Monday, March 28, by 11:59 PM

**CR#4 Due:** Monday, April 25, by 11:59 PM

# Sample Outline & Checklist

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Below is one possible way to think about organizing and outlining your Critical Reflection papers (you can use the subheadings just like this for each section, too):

## Part I: Critical Analysis

A. Generate a claim, an argument drawing on the narrative text(s) and a key idea/term/theory from the class

1. Consider starting with phrases like, "A key idea explored by \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_"

B. Body paragraphs should be close reading examples from your texts supported by the critical readings

1. Open each paragraph with a subclaim connected to the main claim: "One way the novel challenges \_\_\_\_\_ is..." or "The story defines \_\_\_\_\_ as \_\_\_\_\_ arguing that..."

2. Support with brief direct quotes that you close read and analyze and reflect on

3. Support your analyses with brief quotes from the scholarly readings

C. Conclusion should be focused on why the close reading is important

1. Do not try to do too much; avoid broad generalizations; keep things in terms of the texts

## Part II: Reflection

A. Reflection on one key thing that you have learned or found most important in the class

B. Connect this to your in-class participation, your participation on Bb, and any formal work that you have done thus far

1. You might selectively but very briefly quote evidence from your own work, responses, experiences in class

C. End the reflection with what grade you would assign yourself for the Critical Reflection and for Participation in the course (up until this point)

## Works Cited

A. One bibliography for the whole paper in MLA format; see the Purdue OWL for help:

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/mla\\_style/mla\\_formatting\\_and\\_style\\_guide/mla\\_formatting\\_and\\_style\\_guide.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_formatting_and_style_guide.html)

## Checklist

### Part I: Critical Analysis

- Focus on one text from Weeks 1 to 3
- Begin with an analytical claim
- Close read the text using brief, selective quotes (with MLA in-text citations)
- Integrate at least one of the scholarly readings (with MLA in-text citations)
- 2-3 pages (at least two full pages)

### Part II: Reflection

- Reflect on what you have read, learned, done in Weeks 1 to 3
- Reflect on your participation in class and on Bb
- Reflect on your challenges, accomplishments, assignments
- Reflect on how this course connects to other courses or helps you in your major/career
- Self-assessment and grade
- 2-3 pages (at least two full pages)

## Works Cited

- One bibliography for the whole paper for sources in both parts, at the end, in MLA bibliographic format