Cyberpunk Literature Critical Review

This class takes up as a central preoccupation: Why read literature? What does literature do? Reveal? Critique? How might we read literature (or any other text really) as "complexly coded cultural artifacts?" (Lister & Wells 457). What does literature tells about our selves, our lives, our communities, our cultures, and our worlds? What makes literature (compared to other kinds of art or cultural production) important? If the answers to the above questions provide a way to engage, analyze, and politicize literature, then how might we think about these further questions specific to our class goals: What is cyberpunk literature? What are definitions of cyberpunk, technology, cyberspace, race, gender, sexuality? How might literature and other narratives dramatize, define, transform, reconfigure, even challenge these definitions?

Review of a Text

For this assignment, you must select a text **outside** the course texts, one that we have **not** covered in class. Do a little research into the texts that are considered **cyberpunk** literature. The text could be a short story, a novel, a poem, even a film, video, or game. Select a text that you believe fits the theme and goals of the course, a text that you must argue belongs in a class called "Cyberpunk: Past, Present, and Future." An **outstanding text** will engage the inquiries and grinding edges of the course in multiple ways and will speak to the other texts included in the syllabus. When picking a text, avoid the obvious, the superficial, or the easy answer; a **creative risk** or **interpretative leap** might be to choose a text that engages the questions, perhaps in an against the grain way, of the class.

You must read or watch the text. Consider the theoretical and interpretative questions we have been asking and trying to answer all quarter. Then write a short **500-700 word** critical review of the text explicating and expressing why the text would make a strong addition to the course syllabus. Use the following questions as guidelines and jumping off points:

—What kind of text do you want to review? What kind of text would fit well within the scope of the course?
—Who is the text by? Is it someone already included in the syllabus? Would your text replace a current text?
—What makes the text worth re-reading? What features and qualities make it ideal for the class?
—Most importantly, what does the text tell us about the importance of literature? About our culture? About our world? What are the critical questions the text asks, complicates, and answers?

Your critical review must be more than just a descriptive 'book report.' Plot, characters, setting, themes, and summary will be a necessary portion of your review, but the majority of your writing will be **analyzing** and **articulating** why the text befits the course. You might want to take a look at book reviews in a scholarly journal (for English), in the *New Yorker* magazine, or the *Washington Post* or *The New York Times*. Your critical review should offer specific arguments and concrete details drawn from the text itself.

Guidelines and Due Dates

Format: 500 to 700 words, typed, no title page, single-spaced, block format, proper heading
            this is not a Critical Response paper
            posted to the class blog, a Critical Review Turn-In thread will be available later in the semester

Sign-Up: your text must be approved, sign-up for your text via the class blog:
            https://moodle.drew.edu/2/mod/forum/view.php?id=65309

Due: by the end of the semester
            no later than Wednesday, December 10