

**Formal Essay****1800 words; 25 points**

Submitted on e-learning (as .doc or .rtf file)

**Parameters**

Analysis of **one** novel (from list); **do not consult any secondary sources**, (other than Abbott).

Address the relationship of form (narrative discourse) and content,  
concerning the literary function(s) and effect(s)—overall significance or consequence?

**Topic:** flexible; however, must have precise focus and intrinsic connection to novel.

**Objectives**

Present analysis of novel using (at least) one concept from Abbott to discuss narrative;  
through attentive (“close”) reading and active interpretation;  
with critical thinking about both experience and expression (and relationship).

Articulate an analytic thesis (interpretation) based upon class method, readings, and topics;  
support using exclusively textual evidence to illustrate analysis,  
while including insights and commentary about effects throughout.

**Notes**

“Close reading” is attentive to narrative discourse, language/diction, poetics/style, literary devices, allusions, etc.  
Focus on specific passages as examples, to generate and then present interpretations of the text.

Main task is not explaining what the text “means” but its functions and effects.  
While this involves interpretation, we are not seeking or arguing the “true” or “hidden” meaning, or the author’s intention.  
Instead, you’ll convert your interpretation into an analytic thesis statement and support discussion.

Also, not seeking to argue “why” this is an example of a narrative or formal category;  
rather, discuss *how* text functions as such and significance of this understanding, (within thesis and/or conclusion).

In other words, must “say something about” the novel beyond describing it in literal (summary) terms.

**Literary Selections** (choose **one**) \*

Plath, Sylvia. *The Bell Jar* (1966)

Burroughs, William S. *Naked Lunch* (1959).

Vonnegut, Kurt. *Slaughterhouse Five* (1969).

**Exclusions:**

Fitzgerald, F. Scott. *The Great Gatsby* (1925)

Cather, Willa. “The Affair at Grover Station” (1900)

Hurston, Zora Neale. “Spunk” (1925)

Parker, Dorothy. “You Were Perfectly Fine” (1929) & “The Last Tea” (1932)

Porter, Katherine Anne. “Theft” (1929)

\***Note:** contact me about choosing an **alternative text**, with rationale (and tentative approach).

—e.g. novel you’ve read, similar and contemporaneous (American, 1950s-70s); *suggestions below*.

—e.g. **short story** or novella (min. 3,000 words / 10 pages), with experimental style & relevant content

## **Composition Criteria and Tips**

**Analytic Thesis Statement** (*assertion / claim*), supported throughout

Formal **Organization** (logical / topical)

- Intro w/Thesis; Support Discussion; Conclusion (*not redundant*) —see *Composition Notes* (PDF)

**Support Examples** (*specific textual discussion*)

- **MLA Style** (quotations & **citations**)—consult writing resource for accuracy.
  - **note**: essays will not pass without proper citation (*see below*)
- Combination of **direct quotes** (*integrated*) and paraphrases; Lit. examples in **present** tense
  - Tip*: Examples should support your points (subordinate relation and sequence); **avoid summary**.
- **Intrinsic analysis** (“close reading”), using our interpretive method and concepts.
  - **Excludes** narration of process; opinion; and redundant first-person phrasing, (*e.g.* “I think that...”)
  - **Excludes** textual summary, biographical/historical facts, and unnecessary/irrelevant information.

**Edited & Revised**, using Effective Style (*see notes*)

- Formal/proper formatting; standard font/size; title; final (*revised*) draft. (*see example file for formatting*)
  - Note**: I will not grade a “rough draft”—must submit a final version, **thoroughly edited and revised**.
- Upload to E-Learning as Word (**.doc**) or Rich-Text (**.rtf**) format.

## **Academic Honesty Policy**

**Note**: any essay that improperly presents material, whether deliberate or inadvertent, will not receive credit for the assignment, under Academic Honesty / Plagiarism rules. This includes primary, secondary, and *any* online sources (“electronic,” “web,” etc). Be sure to properly **quote/cite** all material – do *not* consult “outside” sources.

Plagiarism violations are subject to additional consequences, including failing the course, under Academic Honor Code. For more information about academic honesty, including definitions and examples of academic dishonesty / plagiarism, see: <<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/honorcode.php> >

### *Alternative Novel Suggestions*

Burroughs. *The Soft Machine* (1961); *Nova Express* (1964); *The Ticket That Exploded* (1962)  
Capote, Truman. *In Cold Blood* (1965)  
DeLillo, Don. *Americana* (1971)  
Dick, Philip K. *The Man in the High Castle* (1962)  
Didion, Joan. *Play It As It Lays* (1970)  
Ellison, Ralph. *Invisible Man* (1953)  
Heller, Joseph. *Catch-22* (1961)  
Kerouac, Jack. *On the Road* (1957); *Big Sur* (1962)  
Keseey, Ken. *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1962)  
Kingston, Maxine Hong. *The Woman Warrior* (1975)  
Mailer, Norman. *The Armies of the Night* (1968)  
Morrison, Toni. *The Bluest Eye* (1970)  
Nabokov, Vladimir. *Pnin* (1957); *Pale Fire* (1962)  
Reed, Ishmael. *Mumbo Jumbo* (1972)  
Roth, Philip. *Portnoy's Complaint* (1969)  
Tyler, Anne. *The Clock Winder* (1972)  
Selby, Hubert. *Last Exit to Brooklyn* (1964)  
Updike, John. *Rabbit, Run* (1960)  
Vonnegut. *Player Piano* (1952); *Mother Night* (1961); *Breakfast of Champions* (1973)

### *Example short stories (most by these authors would apply)*

Barthelme. "The Balloon" (1968)  
Cheever, John. "The Swimmer" (1964)  
Nabokov, Vladimir. "First Love" (1958); "That in Aleppo Once..." (1947)  
O'Connor: "A Good Man Is Hard to Find"; "The Life You Save May Be Your Own" (1955)  
Roth. *Goodbye, Columbus* (1959)