

Disability in Literature Mid-term Paper: DUE TUESDAY OCTOBER 14th

Note: On the syllabus, I neglected to include a date for the paper! (ACK!).

Here's a revised portion of the syllabus for ONLY October 14th & 16th:

Tuesday 14 October	David Foster Wallace: "The Depressed Person" (handout) GROUP 1: One-pager MID TERM PAPER DUE TODAY (no other reading)
Thursday 16 October	Jillian Weise essay & poems (handout) GROUP 2 AND GROUP 1: One-pager

I am providing three different prompts for this paper. Please choose ONE prompt. Note that no matter which prompt you choose, you need to have a thesis statement (your argument) and present evidence (in organized paragraphs). Your paper should also have an introduction and a conclusion.

1. Accessibility on the UML Campus

On the second day of class, we did an "Accessibility Scavenger Hunt." For this prompt, expand on your one-page response to that, and write a more formal, expanded paper on the topic of accessibility on our campus. You could choose to focus on just South campus, or you might take a look at North campus. You might do a small selection of buildings (for instance, how accessible are our very newest buildings on campus like University Crossing, the ETIC, or HSSB?). You should have a thesis statement regarding accessibility on campus, and then have paragraphs detailing specific things about specific spaces on campus. Your paper needs to take a position about the current state of accessibility on campus, and provide evidence to support your position. Your conclusion might suggest specific actions or other ideas. You can and should say "I" and use your own personal knowledge and experience in your paper.

Here is a sample generic thesis for this paper topic:

Just by looking at Building X, Y, and Z, it's clear that accessibility on the UML campus is _____.

2. Disability and the LAB: Response & Reflection

During our visit to the Lowell Association to the Blind, I'm hoping that you learned something about this specific disability – vision impairment – but also perhaps about disability generally. For this prompt, reflect on what you learned from our experience at the LAB and how you connect it to our class, to our reading assignments, or to your life (on- or off-campus). You'll need to have a thesis statement that establishes what you think is the value of the two-day LAB work (having Elizabeth come to us, and our field trip to the LAB), and how it has helped you in some way. You can and should say "I" in the paper, and you should talk about specific things you did, heard, and learned during (& after) these activities.

Here is a sample generic thesis for this paper topic:

Our class visit to the LAB helped me to understand _____ and _____; it is important because of _____.

3. Vote a text off the island (or to keep it)

If you choose this option, you should select one of the texts (or the film) that we have read (or watched) for class and make a case for why it should or should not continue to be on the syllabus. You will want to use the text itself to make your argument. Consider both the style and content of the piece – why does work (or why doesn't it work) for this class? This paper should make an **argument** about a text. You need to come up with **reasons why we should (or why we shouldn't) read this text for class**.

Typically, your paper should have 3 to 5 reasons, with specific details & examples. You can and should say "I" and use your own impressions, experiences, and observations in this paper.

Here is a sample generic thesis for this paper topic:

Story X should not be included in Disability in Literature, because it is _____, it fails to do _____, and students will think _____.

This paper is due at the beginning of class on **TUESDAY, OCTOBER 14th**. Papers should be 3-5 pages in length. Within that page limit, you need to present a thesis and well-organized evidence to support your thesis. If you use sources (such as our class books or other research), you should properly cite that material, and you should include a works cited list at the end. The paper must be in MLA style.

Here's some advice on writing this paper:

- DO NOT start your paper with any of the following: (Some of these are simply my own pet peeves, but they're also general, vague, bland, or over-used – you can do better!)
 - Webster's Dictionary defines "this word" as.....
 - Since the dawn of time....
 - Man has always...Humans have always....
 - Literature has always...All of literature.....Literary history is.....
 - In our society....In today's society.....In modern society...
 - The purpose of this paper is In this paper, I will attempt to
 - "Friendship [or whatever]" means different things to different people....
- DO give your essay a title. It should be more than just "Essay 1." Put the title at the top and center of your first page. You DO NOT need a title page. Save that tree.
- When writing about texts, be very careful not to confuse an AUTHOR with a NARRATOR or SPEAKER or CHARACTER. Also, be sure you're being precise with terminology. For instance, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* is a novel (fiction), while Lynn Manning's *Shoot!* is a play. Make sure you're careful about how you refer to a text, and that you're clear on who the "real people" are – for instance, Temple Grandin is a real person, who in the film is portrayed by Claire Danes, the actor; Grandin is also the *author* of our excerpt from "Thinking in Pictures."
- DO create an engaging opening for your paper. Spend some time trying out different opening lines. Be dramatic. Be bold. Your introductory paragraph should engage the reader, introduce the topic, and then get to a clear thesis statement that provides a "road map" to the paper that follows.
- BE SPECIFIC. Give examples! You have a case to prove, so you need to show evidence from the text itself.
- You CAN use "I" in this paper (I know that might not be what you usually here). You can say "I observed," and "In my experience" if in fact you are talking about things you observed or things you experienced. You can use quotes from classmates or other people, too, so long as you cite them.
- DO use quotes properly (if you use them). This means introducing them, citing them, and providing proper context. In the case of quoted dialogue from a novel or short story, who speaks the words in the quote? If there are any quotes in your paper, there had better be a Works Cited list at the end.
- DO make use of the resources available to you, including your peers, the campus writing center, online writing resources, and your professor.
- DO start writing early; the best papers result from the multiple draft process. Even if you write a great paper on the first draft, developing a second draft will improve it.
- DO NOT plagiarize. Make sure that if you have used words or ideas from others, you are citing them by putting quotation marks around the quoted material and letting your reader know the source through a citation and Works Cited page. As explained on the syllabus, a plagiarized paper results in an "F" for the course.
- Try to take some time to think about the paper assignment and select a topic or approach that appeals to you. I really am interested in your thoughts on these topics, and if you can seriously engage in the topic, you can write a better, more interesting paper!