Toward a Shared Assignment Sequence for the 240-level Courses
Gloria Fisk

Why should we share an assignment sequence? To give our students:

- An intellectual framework to place the texts they study in meaningful relation to each other;
- A critical vocabulary that they can use throughout their coursework.

I’m imagining the shared assignments in relation to a digital portfolio that collects them: [http://sampleportfolio.qwriting.qc.cuny.edu/](http://sampleportfolio.qwriting.qc.cuny.edu/).

**A possible assignment sequence (or two)**

**Annotation Assignment:** (do this three times over the course of the semester):
Copy a two-page spread from the text and annotate it closely. Then write a three-page reflection on your annotations: What did you learn about the text by reading it this closely? Submit the copied pages and your reflection.

**Essay One:** Show how you can interpret a literary text more meaningfully by reading it in light of a keyterm (a literary period, theory, genre, or formal device). Use close reading to show precisely how you interpret the text, and refer to a secondary source to define your keyterm.

**Essay Two:** Develop an argument that shows how a literary text resists tidy categorization by period, movement, or genre. Use close reading to show how you can better understand the text and/or the category by reading them together.

**Alternative Essay Two:** Develop an argument for a particular method of literary interpretation by showing precisely what you can accomplish with it. Prove your thesis with specific references to a primary and secondary text.

**Essay Three:** Expand upon one of the first two essays by revising it with the addition of original research. Enter into a conversation with another critic to show how your thesis has relevance beyond this class.

**Final Project:** Update your blog. To do that, you should:

- Post all of your essays on your blog in one of the three categories: period, theory, or literary term. Identify the most important thing you learned from each essay, and describe that briefly.
- Post three more literary terms (periods, genres, theories, devices, etc.) to the blog in addition to the terms you defined to post your essays.
- Add all of the texts we read to your chronological list (“Texts”).
- If you haven’t done so already, add this course to your list (“Coursework”).