

# Sequence of Assignments for Introduction to College Composition

---

## Unit I: Visual Analysis (Harn Museum of Art)

### Objectives

In this assignment, you will analyze one artwork in the Harn Museum of your choosing. I do not expect you to be well-versed in art history and theory, but rather, as you look at the artwork I ask that you actively and patiently engage in a *process of seeing*, in which you (1) recognize why certain elements drew you to that particular artwork and (2) understand the barriers (cultural, historical, academic, political) that lie between you and your ability to effectively *see* the artwork. While these goals may appear ambitious, you have already begun this process in class in our rhetorical studies of various images and advertisements. Your task now is to independently reflect on your own interactions with images and produce a focused, insightful, and engaging essay.

### Methods

Choose an artwork on display at the Harn Museum of Art. You should allow plenty of time for your visit to the museum to (1) choose an image that particularly engages you and (2) spend time observing it closely and discovering/developing an interpretation of it. During your observation and analysis, you should take detailed notes and perhaps even make a simple sketch of the work. The Harn Museum houses a diverse collection of art produced by many different cultures throughout history. If you have limited knowledge of the cultural history attached to the image you are writing about, consider doing some very basic research so that you know something of the culture or historical period in which your image was produced, but only after you have thoroughly viewed the work on its own.

### Composition

In the first draft you hand in, your work should be of an experimental and exploratory nature. Do not allow yourself to become preoccupied with specific formulas, guidelines, or structures, which have only served to overshadow your writing in the past. Rather, focus on the content and nature of your visual experience of the object. Your paper should principally deal with the rhetorical devices evident in your interaction with the image and consider the history of ideological influences circulating throughout the rhetorical triangle. After I have read through your drafts, I will provide suggestions for how to most effectively structure your paper. If all you give me is a five-paragraph shell, we will have little or no raw material to work with.

### Grading Criteria

In addition to the criteria named on the “Framework for Grading,” your essay will be evaluated based on the level of your critical, imaginative, and rigorous engagement with the visual artwork. Your essay should not merely be a narrative of your viewing process or simple description of the artwork; rather, you will write an analysis that aims to illuminate the significance of your interaction with the artwork, considering various ideological influences, such as culture, morality, politics, and nationality. The final product will be a tightly constructed essay with an engaging thesis and thoughtful details that transform our understanding of the artwork itself.

# Sequence of Assignments for Introduction to College Composition

---

## Unit II: Figurative Language Analysis (Rushdie or Woolf)

### Objectives

In this assignment, you will perform an analysis of a piece of figurative language or symbol from one of the texts discussed in class. By asking you to write a lengthy and well-developed essay that is centered on a small piece of text, I am encouraging you to develop a stronger sense of what it means to write narrowly and concretely while concentrating closely on a textual evidence, to explore both the form and function of figurative language and/or symbolism in either a critical or fictional text. Moreover, you will discover what it means to expand an argument from what at first seems to be an insignificant detail.

### Methods

Select a memorable piece of figurative language or symbol in either Salman Rushdie's "The Free Radio" or Virginia Woolf's "Shakespeare's Sister." You may wish to try exploring some ideas on a few different samplings before you make your final selection. As you do so, look up the definitions of the words in your selected text in the Oxford English Dictionary Online ([www.oed.com](http://www.oed.com)) in order to get a fuller understanding of the multiple dimensions of the various words in your selected text. (Note: you must use the *OED* as your dictionary; it is available through the UF libraries website.) You may also wish to do some additional research on the possible significance of your selected text using reputable academic resources.

### Composition

After you've compiled this data, you should explore the various meanings and functions of your selected text, specifically the ways in which the figurative language or symbol attains meaning within the text and how additional meanings are assigned to it (or how that meaning changes) as the text progresses. Locate these various meanings by tracing and analyzing the various guises and reappearances of your selected textual imagery throughout the story or essay. Base your interpretation on the text itself, citing evidence from the story or essay to make your point. Your final essay should contain a thesis that asserts the significance of your selected text from sentence level to essay level.

### Grading Criteria

As always, refer to the grading rubric (available on WebCT). Generally, you will be graded on the strength, development, and organization of your ideas, the finesse of your style, and the quality of your revision. In particular, you will be evaluated on your ability to take notice of the complex and multiple dimensions of a phrase or image and cultivate a multifaceted argument that branches out from this seed into a meaningful discussion of the essay.

# Sequence of Assignments for Introduction to College Composition

---

## Unit III: Argument Analysis (Carter or Nussbaum)

### Objectives

You are probably used to reading for *information*. When you approach a Freud, Darwin, or Marx, you most likely incline toward trusting and ingesting that information. Indeed, your first reading of a text will be most profitable if you read “with the grain,” trusting and comprehending the point of view of the author. However, as strong readers, you will discover upon additional readings of the text—no matter how “scientific”—that the author’s claims arise from a series of assumptions tied to a web of social, cultural, political, and spiritual beliefs. The art of critical reading, then, arises from your discovery and analysis of the ideological gum that sticks to the more factual information in the argument. Therefore, in this assignment you will read “against the grain,” analyzing the rhetorical and ideological construction of the text, and you will produce your own carefully designed argument in response to the text.

### Methods

A variety of approaches to this assignment is possible. You might, for example, challenge the logical fallacies inherent in the text. Or, you might think “outside” the essay to explore critical questions or issues that arise from gaps in the text. You might even employ the Woolf or Arendt text as a source document to contrast with Carter or Nussbaum. Regardless of which method you use, your essay should not merely reiterate or support the ideas presented in the text, but rather challenge and extend them.

### Composition

Just as with the visual and language analyses, your selection of details from the essay should all point to a single destination that will form your thesis. In other words, do not select claims in the text to analyze at random, but rather construct a uniform thesis based on your critical selection of related issues within the text. You are writing “against the grain” and critiquing elements in the essay by offering alternative ideas. Keep in mind that you are not merely inventing an argument to refute all the ideas in the text, like you might do in a debate or editorial assignment, but rather you are constructing an argument that carefully weighs opposing claims and employs diplomatic and balanced reasoning. In other words, the tone of your essay should be *academic*.

### Grading Criteria

As always, refer to the grading rubric (available on WebCT). Generally, you will be graded on the strength, development, and organization of your ideas, the finesse of your style, and the quality of your revision. In particular, you will be evaluated on your ability to formulate a persuasive argument—established with an effective thesis statement—that rewrites our understanding of the text.

# Sequence of Assignments for Introduction to College Composition

---

## Unit IV: Contextual Analysis (Freire or Beauvoir)

### Objectives

You will now be able to integrate the various skills you've developed this semester: in the Visual Analysis, you critically observed the ideological assumptions that underlie a work of art; in the Language Analysis, you closely examined the nuances of language that shape a dense piece of writing; and in Argument Analysis, you actively resisted the arguments in a text you would normally read for information. In this assignment, you will thoughtfully analyze a text with the use of contextual materials, including a primary and a secondary source. In performing this additional research, you'll establish your *ethos*, or credibility, as you demonstrate familiarity with what other scholars have written on the subject, thereby situating yourself in the history of discussion on the subject. Based on the materials you select and the details you observe, you will begin to establish your identity as a critical thinker.

### Methods

Beginning with your selection of the Freire or Beauvoir essay, mark two or three passages in the text that appeal to you most with concrete images, details, or ideas. From there, brainstorm a series of subject headings that relate to the content of those passages. Your first list might include general or abstract terms, such as "literary representations"; at that point you will need to be creative to arrive at more tangible subjects, such as fairy tales ("Cinderella"). Use these subjects as search terms to locate a primary and secondary source.

Your primary source may be a story, film, artwork, song, comic, constitutional amendment, scientific study, or any other material that requires you to provide the *interpretation*. The source should be dense and serious enough to generate a critical discussion. Your secondary source must be a scholarly (or "peer reviewed") article from OMNIFile or Academic Search Premier; you have access to both of these databases on the UF libraries web site.

### Composition

In essence, you are writing an analytical response to (not a summary of) either the Freire or Beauvoir essay (like the Argument Analysis). In addition to breaking down the text itself (like the Language Analysis), you are *synthesizing* your responses to your materials into a singular statement of your own. Your observations of your primary source should illuminate various ideological influences, such as culture, morality, or politics (like the Visual Analysis). Your discussion of your secondary source should highlight the thesis and significance of the author's argument, but your own thesis and argument should not merely duplicate it; rather, think about your own point of view and how it differs.

### Grading Criteria

As always, refer to the grading rubric (available on WebCT). Generally, you will be graded on the strength, development, and organization of your ideas, the finesse of your style, and the quality of your revision. In particular, you will be evaluated on your ability to thoughtfully and creatively collect contextual sources and synthesize them into a fine-tuned argument that exercises your analytical skills and rhetorical strategies.

# Sequence of Assignments for Introduction to College Composition

---

## Final: Global Revision of Selected Project

### Writing as Revision

All semester we have been asking you to perform “global revisions” when you move from first draft to second or third drafts. A class on writing must be about revising, “stepping outside your writing, to see what it might represent (not just what it says), and to make changes.” You have all succeeded in these efforts to varying degrees. One barrier to this success, however, is that during the semester there’s little time between when you write the draft and when you revise. Recall from the syllabus that a “writer learns most by returning to his or her work to see what it does and doesn’t do, by taking time with a project and seeing where it might lead.” With your final project, there is considerable distance between when you wrote your first draft and when you’re revising that draft.

Note that global revision doesn’t necessarily mean fully abandoning your first attempts. Yes, you’ve come a long way since that first week, but that first piece of writing is still indicative of your identity as a thinker—that identity simply hadn’t materialized in your writing yet. Thus, you will succeed most in this assignment if when you revisit that first piece of writing you meditate on your initial creation of that piece and then *revise* to fully articulate that initial impulse. The final product will *look* substantially different from your initial draft, but it won’t necessarily have an entirely new identity.

### Methods

- Include some additional research beyond initial paper: need at least (3) sources.
- Substantially revise original work.
- Use a maximum of two critical essays.
- Use at least one scholarly secondary source
- Use at least one primary source

### Grading Criteria

As always, refer to the grading rubric (available on WebCT). Generally, you will be graded on the strength, development, and organization of your ideas, the finesse of your style, and the quality of your revision. In particular, you will be evaluated on your ability to thoughtfully and creatively *re-vision* your original work and produce a substantially more sophisticated piece of analytical writing based on the skills you’ve developed over the course of the semester.