Critical Reading

FWIL Assessment 2017-2018

How Are We Doing?

UVM Foundational Writing and Information Literacy
What is Critical Reading?

- Understanding complex texts
- Recognizing the positions and contexts from which texts are coming
- Reading beyond texts into what else they are saying … and not saying
- Connecting texts with one another
- Interacting with texts by building, interrogating, analyzing, and/or challenging
What Are “Texts”? 

• Written, spoken, and performed discourse of all genres
• Visual and auditory compositions
• Data tables, charts, and graphs
What Does Critical Reading Look Like?

• It looks like a lot of things! For starters, these … and more …
  • Clear and concise summaries that show understanding
  • Qualifying statements that indicate a text’s authority and positioning
  • Exposition that goes beyond the text by offering additional perspective or implications
  • Paragraphs that connect two or more texts together in a discussion or a chain of reasoning
  • Projects that talk back to texts on their own terms
2017-2018 Indicator of Critical Reading

- To what extent does this piece of writing recognize and address the grounds for authority in an assigned text?

- or —

- To what extent does this piece of writing address where the author and the text are coming from? (English to English translation)
## Courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TAP Courses F16 F 17</th>
<th>HCOL 85 F 17</th>
<th>ENGS 1 F17</th>
<th>FWIL-Like</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 sections</td>
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<td>39 samples</td>
<td>8 samples</td>
<td>9 samples</td>
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So, how are we doing?
Overall n = 64    Average Holistic Score = 2.86 (Standard Deviation = .70)
Raw Result: Another View

- 2 and below (n = 16): 25.0%
- 2.5 and above (n = 48): 75.0%
- 2.5 and below (n = 30): 46.9%
- 3 and above (n = 34): 53.1%
A Developmental View?

Early
- Gender and the Holocaust
- The Literate Arts
- Cookbook Analysis
- Reading responses

Middle
- Animals v Humans
- Monkey (Journey to the West)

Late
- Global Gender Inequality
- Dancing with the Stars
- Narrative
- Literature Review
Semester Progress: all samples

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But remember:

Not all genres and assignments call for this particular indicator of Critical Reading
Semester Progress: TAP

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Semester Progress: TAP
Q: Why early high scores?
The Prompts

• [Y]our presentation and discussion of the text should be in conversation with Miller—with his concerns, his key terms, his examples and his conclusions. The question you should pursue with this essay is: how do Solnit, Coates and/or Bechdel offer insight into what the literate arts might be “good for” in the face of the worlds they describe?

• Read the articles by Lawrence Langer and Joan Ringelheim. Langer opposes analyzing the Holocaust through the lens of gender. What are the reasons for Langer’s concern? How might Joan Ringelheim respond to Lawerence Langer? Your paper should include a summary of Langer’s arguments that explains his position and arguments from Ringelheim’s article that address these concerns.
Both of these prompts create **rhetorical situations** that require students to consider the positionalities of two or more texts.

**Challenging textual authority**, therefore, is embedded.

**Figuring out where the authors are coming from** is an implied and necessary step in completing this assignment.
Suggested Tweak (for my assignment)

Your first major project for this course is a rhetorical analysis of a cookbook – any cookbook you choose (including those in Bailey/Howe Library’s Special Collections). I also have some cookbooks I will bring to class that you are welcome to borrow, or you may find one of your own. You might even call home and see if your family has one you can borrow. Our focus will be on printed books, not online sites.

Rhetorical analysis means that you attend to the various elements of the “rhetorical situation” – what prompted this cookbook to be written (or what is the exigence)? To whom is it written (or who is the audience)? Why was it written (or what is its greater purpose, whether stated or unstated)? How does it fit or not into similar books of its type (or how does it conform to or break accepted rules of the genre)? How does the book feel, look, and sound (or what is its style)? And what is the larger picture around this book’s production and circulation (or what is its context)?

Write a piece that combines the following elements:

1. Addresses the most relevant aspects of the rhetorical situation in an analytical essay.
2. Uses specific textual or visual details from the cookbook to illustrate the analysis.
3. Hones in on one particular recipe as an exemplar, offering a thorough analysis of the rhetorical choices made, and how they work for the reader/user.
4. Is organized in a way that helps you make a greater point and is easy for readers to follow.
5. Makes a greater point beyond the analysis: why do the writer’s choices matter, what overall effect do they have on readers/users, and how does that fit into a larger societal context?

Aim for 1250 to 1500 words with excerpts and illustrations.
If we want to see a feature in their projects, we need to

A) teach it,
B) embed it, and
C) repeat with increasing sophistication throughout the semester

We foster deep learning through intentional, multiple, repeated, and varied opportunities for practice over time
And when possible …

Building meta-cognition gives students

• a framework to understand their own intellectual work
• a label to recognize when they see it in others’ work
• a transferable concept for applying this practice in other situations, classes, and contexts

*English-to-English*: tell students what they have done in challenging the grounds of authority for a text, and why it is important that they keep doing it