Exploratory Essay Instructions

# Objective: You will write a 900 word (or more) MLA-formatted exploratory essay for each primary text this semester. For each essay, you will explore how natural philosophy/natural science/science influenced the author of the primary text, shaped the text, and reflected the historical period the text was written.

# Step by Step Guidance

1. Review the Exploratory Essay link in the Start Here module.
2. Peruse the links in the Context section of the module.
3. Read the primary text and the secondary text.
   1. Each primary text is paired with a scholarly secondary source that I curated from the HCC databases.
4. Think about how natural philosophy/natural science/science is embedded in the primary text.
5. Formulate a question you may have about the use of science in the primary text.
   1. For example, Why did Jonson use alchemy as a vehicle for satire? What attitudes towards science did the people have in Jonson’s time?
   2. If you need further guidance, contact me at [eugene.penzien@hccs.edu](mailto:eugene.penzien@hccs.edu) or Canvas.
6. Find two more secondary sources.
   1. The sources you select must have one of the following elements:
      1. Works Consulted
      2. Works Cited
      3. References
      4. Footnotes
      5. Endnotes
   2. If your source does not have one of those elements, you cannot use it as a secondary source.
      1. Wikipedia, Encyclopedia Britannica, and their ilk are not secondary sources, but you can use them as starting points for your research.
   3. I strongly recommend that you use the HCC Library’s databases. Google Scholar is okay.
   4. If you are unsure about the relevance, reliability, and/or credibility of your source, consult with me at [eugene.penzien@hccs.edu](mailto:eugene.penzien@hccs.edu) or through Canvas.
7. Write, write, write
   1. The goals of the exploratory essay are to engage your mind, to find possible connections, and to develop a thread of coherent thought.
      1. You may connect the primary text with another primary text.
   2. **Your essay must include direct evidence from the primary text.**
   3. You are not trying to argue anything.
   4. By the end of your exploratory essay, you may have a tentative thesis. If you do not, that is okay.
   5. Let go of the idea of perfection, the binary of right and wrong.
   6. Just do your best.
   7. If you get stuck or think you are spiraling, contact me at [eugene.penzien@hccs.edu](mailto:eugene.penzien@hccs.edu) or through Canvas.
8. The essay must be in MLA format.
   1. 900 words is the minimum, but you can go over the 900 word limit.
   2. Header, heading, creative title, in-text citations, Works Cited are required.
   3. Times New Roman, 12 point font
   4. Double space the entire essay.
   5. Include the word count at the end of the essay, but before the Works Cited page.
      1. The header, heading, in-text citations, and Works Cited do not count towards the total.
   6. **Provide direct evidence from the primary text.**
   7. **You can revise a graded essay for a better grade. The hard deadline still applies.**
9. Make sure you submit the right essay to the right essay submission slot.
   1. The submission slot can be found in each module in Canvas
   2. In addition, the submission slots can be found in the Assignments section in Canvas.
   3. **You can revise a graded essay for a better grade. The hard deadline still applies.**
10. Please avoid procrastinating at all costs. This course is only five weeks long.
    1. If you need help, please reach out to me by email ([eugene.penzien@hccs.edu](mailto:eugene.penzien@hccs.edu)) or through Canvas.
11. The hard deadline for the essays is August 12, 2022 at 11:59 pm in Canvas.
    1. Do not email me your essay(s).

# Schedule

| Exploratory Essay | Primary Text | Suggested Due Date | Definite Due Date |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| #1 | The Alchemist | July 15, 2022 | August 12, 2022 |
| #2 | An Essay on Man | July 22, 2022 | August 12, 2022 |
| #3 | Frankenstein | July 29, 2022 | August 12, 2022 |
| #4 | To the Lighthouse | August 5, 2022 | August 12, 2022 |
| #5 | Children of Men | August 12, 2022 | August 12, 2022 |

# Rubric

Each essay is graded out of 100 points possible.

| Criterion | 20 - 18 | 17..9 - 16.0 | 15.9 - 14.0 | 13.9 - 12.0 | 11.9 - 0.0 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| MLA Format | 5 errors | 6 errors | 7 errors | 8 errors | 9 or more errors |
| Content:   1. **Three secondary sources are present** 2. **Direct evidence from the primary text is incorporated in the essay** | Provides consistent brilliant insights, stays on track for the entire essay, compelling logic, **expertly weaves the primary text throughout the essay** | Provides somewhat consistent brilliant insights, somewhat goes on tangents, somewhat compelling logic | Makes tenuous connections with weak logic, rambles for a third of the essay | Juggles multiple ideas in an inefficient manner, rambles for two-thirds of the essay | Completely off topic; maybe did not turn in the essay |
| Voice | The author’s voice harmonizes with the sources | The author’s voice is sometimes obscured by the sources in the essay. | The author relies on the sources’ voices for half of the paper | The author overrelies on the sources. | The author’s voice does not exist. |
| Grammar and Mechanics | 5 errors; demonstrates tremendous sentence variety | 6 errors | 7 errors | 8 errors | 9 or more errors |
| Word Count | 900 words or more | 899 words - 800 words | 799 words - 700 words | 699 words - 600 words | 599 words - 0 words |