

GERM 1025/1026 Essay 2

Length: Approximately 1,250 words

Citation Format: MLA

Essay Due Date: Dec. 6 (submit via Brightspace)

Here are some possible essay questions. Choose **one**. You are allowed to come up with your own question/topic, but be sure to clear it with me first. Essays should be around three to four pages in 12-point font, double-spaced (not including the bibliography). As with the essay samples that I have included on Brightspace, you do not need a title-page; instead, you just need to include your name, student number, email address, course number, my name, and the date in the top right hand corner of the first page.

Your essay should have a title that reflects not only your topic but your argument about that topic; an introductory paragraph that introduces your topic, suggests how it will be approached in regards to the text, and closes with a clear and specific thesis statement; supporting paragraphs organized around points that support your thesis and that open with a strong topic sentence; specific evidence from the primary text itself; a sense of sound and logical transition from supporting point to supporting point; and a strong conclusion that reinforces your thesis and suggests something about its wider implications. The essay samples on Brightspace are very clear in regards to what I am looking for, so be sure to look over these before and while writing.

Be specific, be organized, and be sure to make good use of the text when making your case. When it comes to quoting from the text, be sure to comment on the quotes you use and incorporate them into your larger argument. If you have any questions while writing your essay, or if you would like me to look over a draft of your essay, please let me know.

As always, please let me know if you have any questions.

1. How does Kafka explore the dynamics between father and son in “The Judgement?” How does the story contradict one’s typical expectations of stories involving conflict between the generations? To what ends?
2. How does Kafka explore the surreal and unexplained in “A Country Doctor?” How might the story be felt to explore the inherent absurdity and the inherent lack of meaning to life and to the world around us? How does the doctor simply go along with events rather than really responding to them? To what ends?
3. How does Kafka explore the abuses of power and the unimpeachability of Government forces in “The Penal Colony?” In what ways does the story outline the ways that power structures can lead to the dehumanization and brutalization of the other? How do these structures negatively affect powerful and powerless alike? To what ends?
4. How does Kafka explore the family dynamic in “The Metamorphosis?” How does he show the anger, animosity, and evil lurking beneath the veneer of a loving family? To what ends?
5. Many critics have made tremendous efforts to define the nature of Gregor’s change and what its possible implications may be. Why does he change? What does he change into? What are the effects of his change, both on himself and on those around him? I would like you to take one of these possible areas of inquiry and then explore it in terms of its possible implications.
6. How does Gregor’s perceptions, both of himself and of the members of his family, affect how his story is understood and responded to? To what ends?
7. While the metamorphosis suggested by the title is often automatically (and understandably) connected to Gregor, the other members of his family also undergo pretty radical changes over the course of the narrative. This is especially true of Grete, Gregor’s sister. Make the case that the greatest changes, the greatest metamorphoses, may not involve Gregor at all.
8. How does Kafka explore both the plight and the pretensions of the artist in “The Hunger Artist?” How might the performer’s predicament suggest Kafka’s own, written as it was so close to the end of his life? To what ends?
9. Use two stories as examples to draw from and explore to tackle how Kafka explores themes such as self-abasement and self-hatred. Why is it that his characters often take upon themselves the negative feelings expressed by others?

Why do they so often surrender? Why do they so often desire nothing else but to disappear? To what ends?