

Paper #1: Poem Explication & Analysis

Deadlines:

Proposal: Tuesday, 9/26: Submit the title of the poem you intend to write on and a short rationale (a sentence or two) on why you've chosen this poem

Final Paper: Thursday, 10/5: Bring a hardcopy to class and send as an email attachment to Marlo.Starr@Emory.edu **before** the start of class

Requirements: 5 to 6 pages; double-spaced Word document with 12-point font; 1-inch margins all around; MLA style

Email subject line: "Poetry 205 Paper 1"

Save your paper with following file name: "Full Name_Paper 1" (e.g. "Marlo Starr_Paper 1")

Paper heading, creative title, and page count: In the upper left-hand corner, list your name, date, class, and assignment, and center your paper title below the heading. Make sure to include a page count in the header or footer of your paper. For example:

Marlo Starr

October 5, 2017

ENG 205W:Poetry

Paper 1: Poem Explication & Analysis

Chilling Effects/Affects: Robert Frost's Snowflake Complex in "Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening"

Overview

Your first paper for this class is an explication and analysis of a poem from the syllabus. This assignment is a chance for you to demonstrate your ability to analyze poetry using some of the methods and skills we have practiced in class. Illuminating the precise operations of a poem can also help you to develop the clarity, specificity, and nuance of your own writing.

An analysis goes through a poem line by line, sometimes word by word, in the service of making an argument about how the poem creates its meaning. **Ultimately, your thesis should make an arguable claim about the poem, using technical language learned in class and quotations from the poem as evidence to support your claim.** Generally, the thesis should come at the end of the introductory paragraph.

At its broadest level, a poem analysis answers: "What is the relationship between form and content in this poem?" You might choose to think of your thesis as a specific and creative answer to this question. Because a full explication of a poem could fill a book, you will need to choose your evidence for your argument carefully. You likely won't be able to include everything you notice. You may find it helpful to explicate the poem exhaustively on your own and only then create an argument, selecting pieces of your observations as needed.

A note on organization

The way you choose to organize your paper will depend on which poem you choose and the argument you intend to make. Ultimately, however, your paper should be organized around your

central claim or original idea about how we should understand the poem. Regardless of how you proceed, resist the temptation to structure your paper by poetic device, as in the following:

Introduction: The rhyme, imagery, and meter suggest this poem is about loss.

Paragraph 1: The rhyme suggests this poem is about loss.

Paragraph 2: The imagery also suggests this poem is about loss.

Paragraph 3: The meter also suggests this poem is about loss.

Conclusion: Therefore, this poem is about loss.

Do not do this. The paper above loses the opportunity to show how multiple poetic devices work together to build effects. More importantly, it goes nowhere. A paper, like a poem, needs movement.

Quotations

Follow MLA formatting for quoting lines of poetry. (For example, more than four lines of poetry should be represented as a block quotation. In running text, lines of a poem are separated with a forward slash. Poem titles are set off with quotation marks.) See the [Purdue OWL](#) for reference. You will quote frequently from the poem to illuminate your claims. Imagine your reader as someone who is familiar with the poem but does not have a copy on hand.