***English 100: Reading and Writing About Literature***

**Research Paper Assignment**

2000 words

Due: April 9, 2018 (3 p.m.)

Please write a research paper that directly addresses one of the following essay topics.

The discipline of English values original arguments that engage with scholarly peer reviewed articles and books. Please cite at least five peer reviewed critical works in the body of your essay. You will make original arguments about the novel you discuss by drawing on the tradition of inquiry you establish. Your sources could be about the work or author or the graphic novel as genre or medium, or might relate more generally to literary or interdisciplinary topics. If possible, summarize one of the articles studied in class as part of the tradition of inquiry and take a position in relation to that article.

You will be evaluated on your knowledge of the stylistic and structural conventions of scholarly essay writing in the discipline of English; your argument (the originality of your thesis and the evidence you marshal to prove it); and the quality of your critical sources. Within these parameters, write in your own voice and style. See the attached for more information about my marking criteria.

**Topic 1**: The graphic novels we have studied this term are all considered to be autobiographical. Make an original argument about what any novel we have studied this term contributes to *graphic memoir as genre*.

**Topic 2**: Analyze the relationship between *verbal and visual narrative* in any of the last three novels we studied this term and make an original argument about about how this contributes to the *graphic memoir as genre*.

**Topic 3**: The cultural work of graphic memoirs can be representational, didactic, or therapeutic. Make an original argument about the educational value of the *graphic novel as medium* in any novel we have studied this term.

**Topic 4**: Graphic novels can be a medium to represent difference. Make an original argument about how any novel we have studies represents *cultural or ethnic difference* experienced by second-generation American immigrants.

**Topic 5**: Some graphic memoirs express an individual’s experience of physical or mental illness, helping readers to cope with similar experiences. Make an original argument about *the therapeutic value* of these narratives.

**Research Essays**

Recent editions of the *Norton Introduction to American Literature* outline the requirements and conventions for research essays within the discipline of English at the first year level and also include a sample essay. You may wish consult this material at <http://wwnorton.com/college/english/naal8/writing.aspx>.

Here is a concise summary of the standard conventions of research essays. My grading will reflect how well your essay meets these conventions.

**1 Citing Your Primary Literary Text or Texts**

Your essay has quoted the literary text that you are interpreting.

**2 Citing Secondary Critical Texts**

Your essay has cited at least five peer-reviewed critical sources (ideally from the MLA database)

These sources are contemporary and immediately relevant to your

topic.

These sources have been properly formatted on your Works Cited page.

You have cited all of the sources that you used in your essay and included all of these in your Works Cited page.

You have used reporting frames, quotes, and page numbers to indicate the words or ideas of critic whose works you have read.

**3 Structure**

**Intro**

Your intro establishes a controversy (historical, interpretive, formal, etc.)

Your intro cites existing criticism on this topic (usually two to four sources using in text-citation).

Your intro ends with a thesis that resolves the controversy or problem that your introduction has outlined.

**Body paragraphs**

Your body paragraphs exhibit the fundamental of paragraph structure: the claim + evidence pattern.

Your body paragraphs have topic sentences (claims).

Your body paragraphs are usually about five and eight sentences long.

Your body paragraphs cohere around a single topic or idea.

**Conclusion**

Makes a judgment/evaluation; acknowledges limitations; suggests further areas of inquiry.

**4 Mechanics**

Correct grammar, spelling, punctuation and in-text citation (reporting frame, quotes where required, page number, proper indenting, spacing etc.

**5 Argument**

Your essay has a thesis at the end of your introduction.

Your thesis is original.

Your thesis is narrow, debatable and interpretive (see the Norton online resource.

Your thesis is well-worded: it is easy to understand rather than convoluted or awkward.

Your essay proves your thesis.

Your essay is argumentative rather than descriptive.

**6 Overall Polish and Sophistication**

Your essay coheres around a single topic: it has a narrow focus.

Your essay is not a first draft. It has been revised, edited, and polished.

Your essay engages with a particular tradition of inquiry: historical, theoretical, or formal and/or a body of criticism about a single author.

Your writing style (or discourse) is scholarly or academic.