

Writing Project #1: Blog Entries

Your first writing project emphasizes close reading and writing as a process of academic inquiry. While your final writing assignment for Project #1 will culminate with a critical analysis of a piece of literature, we will craft several short blog entries in which we practice the fundamental moves of academic writing. These blog entries will help us to develop our ideas about the texts we read and to situate our own critical perspective on war literature within a larger academic conversation. In this respect, our blog entries will serve as preliminary drafts for the final writing assignment.

We will begin the course by reading several short stories and poems about war, using these texts as the raw material for our writing and as a springboard for our inquiry into the relationship between writing and war and what this relationship tells us about language, identity, culture, memory, and myth. We will strive to *read* and *interpret* these texts as *representations* of war, paying particular attention to the choices our authors make as they craft their stories and compose their poems. The point of our first writing project is to begin to think like a writer and scholar, paying close attention to details, noticing patterns and anomalies in a text, raising questions about the author's choices, and developing claims that begin to answer those questions.

Finally, to situate ourselves and begin to build the broader conversation of our class, we will read several academic essays about the relationship between writing and war, language and violence, narrative and identity, etc. These essays will not only provide us with a conceptual framework for thinking about war writing, but will also offer scholarly voices with which we will enter into conversation in our writing. Additionally, these articles will serve as models for our own writing. We will read with an eye not only to what they say, *but how they say it*. How is the author using other writers' words and ideas? To what extent does the writer's main point evolve throughout the essay? How does she accommodate other views? As writers, these are some of the questions we will want to ask of our texts.

Blog Entries: As a way to begin thinking and writing about these representations of war, you will compose two short blog entries. Although we may think of blogs as a more informal mode of writing, you should approach your entries as a form of academic writing and follow proper conventions of argument, organization, and citation/documentation. Each blog entry asks you to do something slightly different; however, each entry should:

- 1) Articulate a claim that gives the entry a clear focus
- 2) Support that claim with evidence from the literary and/or academic text(s)
- 3) Judiciously paraphrase and selectively frame any quotations you may use from course texts
- 4) Use MLA parenthetical citation (when necessary)
- 5) Be no more than 500 words

To post your entry, go to the course site (http://sites.duke.edu/writing101_15_f2013/) and click on "+ New" and "Post" at the top of the page. Give each post a title (something that captures your perspective). After writing your post, look for "Post Tags" on the right-hand bottom part of the page; make sure you tag your post with at least one descriptor (e.g., Parker Adderson, O'Brien, failure of language, enchantment/disenchantment, Wilfred Owen, etc.). To post your entry, click on "Publish". You can read the class posts by going to the Course Blog page.

Blog Entry #2: Prior to composing this blog entry, you should read Ambrose Bierce’s “Parker Adderson, Philosopher”; “Killed at Resaca”; and “What I Saw at Shiloh.” Please also read Rosenwasser and Stephen’s “Analysis.” Using one or more of Rosenwasser and Stephen’s “moves,” analyze one of Bierce’s texts. While you may refer to all three of Bierce’s stories (as well as “Chickamauga”), please focus your blog entry on one of the stories, devoting the bulk of your analysis to it. This blog entry is your opportunity to begin to interpret Bierce’s writing and, in the process, develop your own critical position. What points/ideas/themes are most interesting, significant, important, or strange for you? What questions has Bierce’s text raised for you? What is he trying to do in these stories? What is he trying to say about war or about writing and war? Is there an “argument” driving and organizing his stories? This blog entry is the chance to begin to develop your response to the specific questions or details of the text you find most interesting or important. It offers a chance to begin to interpret and analyze Bierce’s text, to make it your own, as it were. **Post prior to class on Tuesday, September 3.**

Blog Entry #3: This blog entry offers you a chance both to write about war poetry and to engage other scholars in conversation about war writing. Choose 1-2 of the poems we read for Tuesday, September 10, and develop an analytical claim about that poem. Prior to composing your blog entry, review Harris’s “Forwarding.” In the course of your analysis, strive to “forward” one of our course readings (Cole, Favret, Winn, or McLoughlin). This is your chance to put their ideas to use and, in the process, continue to articulate your own position. As Harris reminds us, “a writer *forwards* a text by taking words, images, or ideas from it and putting them to use in new contexts. In forwarding a text, you test the strength of its insights and the range and flexibility of its phrasing” (37-38). As you write, keep the questions from Blog Entry #2 in mind. **Post prior to class on Tuesday, September 10.**