

BOOK & FILM REVIEWS

Due Date

COMPOSITIONS 4 & 5



Probably the most common form that writing about literature takes is the book review. Most major publications have regular reviews, and there are any number of websites dedicated to this form of criticism as well. Book reviews show up in popular sources, like newspapers and magazines, as well as in scholarly journals.

This semester, you will complete two reviews. You may choose to review a book for both compositions, or you may choose one book and one movie (you may not, however, review two movies). You may choose to review one of the texts or movies that we are studying this semester (it must be one that we read in its entirety), or you can review a text or movie not on our syllabus that fits with our course theme of *the strange* (with my prior approval).

Your review should offer a brief summary, but it should focus primarily on interpreting and evaluating the text. What is the text doing (or trying to do)? What works? What doesn't? Would you recommend this text to a person or group? If so, to whom? Can you compare it another text of some kind? What is your overall judgement about the text? Your review should have some framing and a controlling idea to give it structure and make it cohesive. Remember, your goal is not to comment on *everything* in the text (good, bad or otherwise), but rather to craft an evaluative response to help potential readers/viewers determine whether they will enjoy this particular text. You may want to include exemplary quotes from the text.

As you write your reviews, you will select a rhetoric situation. Do you imagine your review being published in *The New York Times*? On *The Rumpus.net*, or *Slate*? Is your review less formal—such as a post on a personal blog? If your text is not recent, are you reviewing it as if it were recently released, or do you have a reason for writing a new review for it? Your reviews should each be approximately 500 words in length posted to your blog. Additionally, you will write a second, short post reflecting on what rhetorical choices you made for your review.

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Basic Features

- a brief summary
- some interpretation
- an evaluative response
- framing and controlling idea
- a final judgement

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Process

- choose a book or film
- identify the genre and primary audience and develop some criteria based on those factors
- determine what you think the text is doing
- assess what is good or not about the text
- choose a rhetorical situation
- develop a composition plan
- draft your review
- revise your review
- post your review and your reflection post

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Learning Objectives

This assignment requires you to use critical thinking and reading skills to craft an evaluative response to a text. In order to complete this assignment, you will go through a process of planning, creating, and revising your compositions. You will identify and engage genre conventions for book reviews, as well as making stylistic and rhetorical choices based on your chosen rhetorical situation. You will gain experience composing, revising, and sharing your work in a digital environment.

Grading

Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Does the student take satisfactory steps to plan, create, and revise this composition?
Rhetorical Choices	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Does the student demonstrate a sophisticated awareness of audience?- Does the student develop her or his ethos appropriately?- Is the composition organized and arranged effectively?- Has the student made an effective argument?- Does the student demonstrate an understanding of the genre and conventions?
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Is the text in this composition stylistically interesting and sophisticated?- Does the writer transition smoothly between ideas and paragraphs?- Does the format of the text adhere to conventions of the genre and medium?- Is the writing free of grammar and spelling errors?- Are quotes used effectively and correctly?- Does the writer grab readers' attention in the beginning?- Does the writer effectively conclude the text?
Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Is the design of this composition appropriate to the content and genre conventions?- Does the visual rhetoric of the design support the rhetoric of the written text?- Does the student use the medium well?
Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Does the student offer an evaluative response to a book or film that fits our course theme of <i>the strange</i>?- Does the review have framing and a controlling idea to give it structure?- Does the student make a compelling case for his or her assessment?- Are all ideas fully developed?
Basic Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Did the student choose a book or film to review that connects to the theme of <i>the strange</i> in some way?- Did the student compose a review of that text which is interpretive and evaluative?- Did the student post the review to her or his blog?- Did the student post a reflection on his or her rhetorical choices?- Did the student include a citation for the text?