2019 Syllabus Part 2
KEY CONCEPTS AND TERMS v1 (Jan 29)

The contents of this document are valid for all classes I am teaching Spring 2019

Instructor: John R Wallace

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Table of Contents

*Student Learning Center, Berkeley

Our SLC Writing Program might be helpful to you when you are writing essays for my classes. (https://slc.berkeley.edu/writing)

*Literary terms—Purdue Online Writing Lab

Purdue University has some excellent online resources for students writing essays, including essays in the humanities. You might find this page useful, if you are unsure of basic literary terms: Purdue Online Writing Lab: Literary Terms (https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject_specific_writing/writing_in_literature/literary_terms/index.html)

academic responsibility

See S2: *Academic integrity* for the full definition. In brief: "We are expected to be diligent in accuracy, use good critical judgment at all times, avoid false argumentation as well as promoting ideas through empty rhetoric."

access

"Access" means how others can access your document, which is usually a secondary source you have used in your research. Provide a working URL, one that is legal and does not require registration.

active learning

See S2: *Active learning* for the full definition. My definition of active learning is broad. It covers three aspects of engagement in the course: knowledge acquisition, exercises that deepen meaning or develops skills, and production (analysis). It includes time investment, self-initiative on the part of the student, commitment to academically responsible behavior, deployment of intellectual curiosity, and dynamic engagement in the course at multiple levels.

analysis

See *S2: Analysis* for the full definition. In brief: "Analysis, for the purpose of this course, is the investment of time in the informed and disciplined consideration of an object(s) to develop interpretations, observations, and/or tentative conclusions that are credible, and either

interesting or useful or both to you, the writer, and your targeted readers, by affording clarity to the object, drawing attention to under-noticed but note-worthy aspects of the object, or offering new ways to think about it." Each of the key terms of this statement is defined at *S2: Analysis*.

assignment titles

The system I use puts the type of assignment first, then the date, then where the assignment is completed, then sometimes a tag to help remember its comment. EX190124 InC Active Learning means "An exercise (EX) done in class session Jan 24, 2019, that was about active learning."

"critical" (as in "critical judgment" or "critical thinking")

This is from assignmentfirm.com. It is a mess (it needs editing!), but is a reasonably good and easy-to-understand description of how I use the word "critical" in assignment instructions and elsewhere in my courses:

> … at the university level, being critical or [offering a] critique means that you are required to evaluate or examine the evidence and certain arguments to form a judgement about them.
>
> …
>
> Being critical as per the terminology used at the university level and for the purpose of this guide, means asking thought[-]provoking questions about the subject matter, ideas or words you are investigating and passing judgement on [them]. This is in terms of how valuable or useful the words or ideas are. It emphasis [emphasizes] that you refuse [to] accept ideas simply at face value and believe that there is a certain way of thinking about an object or situation. It also refers to recognizing that fact that in the course of thinking critically, scrutinizing, evaluating and judging things from different perspectives, there is more often than not no correct answer or viewpoint.

code

Code are the marks, letters, words, images, and sounds of an object that are assembled to convey meaning but have not yet been interpreted. It is the "raw data" of the object, before it is interpreted or otherwise understood. The distinction between "code" and "text" is important in my classes to emphasize that it is us as readers who attribute meaning to something and that result is a "text" and our texts may or may not be similar. This concept keeps on our mind our own interpretive predispositions.

compound statements

One of the common errors in a variety of written submission. If ANY of your written sentences have the word "and" or "or" in them, be sure this is truly necessary. In other words, seek simplicity and focus in your statements rather than evoking multiple concepts at the same time. In the real world, such compound statements are both more accepted and more often necessary for complex description. But in the world of my grading, where there are many assignments to read, and very little time to complete the grading, and, too, where students are often fuzzy in their expressions, simplicity is desired, and often scores better, too.

> The aesthetically conscientious art form of Japanese paper-making derived its fixation on **purity and strength** from Shinto beliefs.
>
> > Yes. This is a list of equally important qualities that are more meaningful when side-by-side in the same list.

> Religion also became a valuable domain for establishing Japan's independent ideals and beliefs.
>
> > No. What is the difference between "ideals" and "beliefs"? There are indeed differences, but they are not necessary to the conversation. The analysis is just as successful by listing one.

> He is very charming and (A) never misses opportunity to meet a beautiful or (B) interesting lady.
>
> > A: Yes. This is connecting two sentences in a logical conceptual that makes the description content-rich.
> >
> > B: No? As a casual comment this works, but we do not make casual comments in *interpretive project reports. If there is something in a report, we assume it is there for a reason. When reading seriously like this, it is fair to ask, "What is the difference between wanting to meet a beautiful woman or an intelligent woman?" Does the writer mean to make a distinction or not? This is good English and works pretty well but I would rather we tighten our comments better than this.

> Knowing, or (A) accepting that sumo was a direct descendent from accounts in premodern history was important in particular to the upper-classes of Edo period Japan.
>
> > A: No. Just one of these is a good observation. When they are both here, I begin to wonder if we are supposed to worry about a difference between "knowing" and "accepting." That just seems to be a confusing question to raise in the middle of describing something else.

> In the rare instances when they went out, their faces were hidden behind the fans they carried or (A) the curtains of their carriages.

A: Yes. This is like the first one—a necessary and useful list.

If they were able to keep the affections of their husband or (7) lovers, then they would be provided and (8) cared for.

7 & 8: Yes. This is like the one just mentioned.

content-rich

When I say, "respond with a content-rich paragraph" or "give your statement more content" or such, I mean that I expect you to make substantive statements in contrast to topical, or detail-poor statements. Provide actual content rather than give labels of what the content is.

Topical (label of topic) statements pop up in many student submissions:

Submitted description of a meeting —

Topical (detail-poor): "My partner and I met and noticed we have a lot of differences in how to interpret the films." You have only said: "There were differences ...". I don't know what they are.

Content-rich: "My partner and I met. Anne felt that Himiko's jealousy was primarily the result of a difference in status between Himiko and the other woman. Jeremy thought that was possible but personally felt the jealousy was the result of an insecurity Himiko had based on an earlier relationship." (You have said both that there were differences and what those differences were.)

A student's thesis statement —

Topical (labels the topic only, that is, says what it is about only): I will explore sacrifice in two films, "My Little Sister" and "The Last Letter."

Content-rich statement: I will explore the final sacrifice that is made by the main protagonist in two films: "My Little Sister" and "The Last Letter." I plan to conclude that the sacrifice in "My Little Sister" isn't really that at all. Because of the content of her suicide note, as well as the location of that suicide, it is, instead, simply an act of anger meant to hurt her lover. However, "The Last Letter" involves a real sacrifice by the protagonist: he gives up his love to allow her to marry someone else. This is not what he wants for himself, but he realizes this is best for the person he loves. I compare these two sacrifices and suggest that, in the case of the Korean film, the movie is less about romance than plot twists and the dark nature of people, while in the case of the Japanese film, the theme is unrequited love from beginning to end. I suggest that the Korean film is fairly distant from any premodern roots but the Japanese film continues a long tradition of not being able to be with one's lover, something we saw already in The Tale of Genji.

A student's analysis appearing in an essay —

Topical (detail-poor, lacks specificity in content): "Encounters on a Dark Night" is a heavy-feeling story. (I can't be sure exactly what you mean by "heavy" — it could be many different things.)

Content-rich: "Encounters on a Dark Night" is a heavy-feeling story because of its detailed portrait of a woman entangled, if not completely entrapped, in strong, painful emotions.

"context is king" — a course standard

This means that the context decides whether or not something is plagiarism, not your intention: context is king. If you present an idea in a situation (context) where there is a reasonable chance that the reader will think the idea is your, and it is not, then you need to cite the source. This is true for all assignments in my class, even the most casual ones, not just formal essays or exams.

credible, interesting, useful

These are the three expected qualities of analysis done for my courses. Put more graphically, the list should look like this: "always credible" + "interesting or useful or both." Readers read academic work both for intellectual stimulus or for information and concepts that they might themselves use in their own work. Often what is useful is also interesting but this isn't required, and what is interesting might not be useful. No matter what the combination, if the work is not credible it is not very interesting and is probably more or less useless. All of these result from situating the analytic work not in a "this is between me and the professor, an instrument where I show what I have learned or what I can do" but rather placing the work before an imagined audience with expectations of that they will either be stimulated or informed or both by your work. Put another way, it recognizes analysis as happening in a social and work context, not a classroom. I chose to position the analysis I ask of you in this way because I think this is an important thing to teach, that is, how to negotiate between what you want to study and what the world wants from you or needs from you. Too much scholarship, I think, is isolated and lacks impact because those doing the analysis lack an interest in performing the analysis for a community.

"credible"

Credibility, above all, comes from the readers sense that time has been invested in the work. If it is work done in a flash they could have done it themselves so they expect very little new from the work. Then, in addition, readers of scholarly work are naturally skeptical so they look for those aspects that might reveal that the writer is more style than substance, or uninformed

about the topic, or a weak thinking. Probably this shows most rapidly in the sources used and how they are used or undisciplined logic or the substitution of rhetoric for substance.

"Credible" means some or all of the below, depending on the assignment:

- academically credible sources* have been used with care (*Please refer to my course definition of credible sources under the topic devoted for that. I expect you to know this information on first submission, not after I have given you feedback on something.)
- the logic is reasonable
- the submission seems to have benefited from a "cold" rereading by the author (you) of its analysis (observations, interpretations and conclusions) to judge whether the ideas are reasonable
- there is a sense that the work was not rushed

"interesting"

Interest derives from understanding the interests of the readers, on the one hand, and being someone with interesting ideas on the other. But it also means that the author has avoided arguing the obvious, but instead presents to the reader new or unexpected ways of thinking about something.

"Interesting" means some or all of the below, depending on the assignment:

- the "random student 5-minute" standard: your comments about the object at hand are likely to be better (more insightful or interesting or nuanced/complex) than a randomly selected Berkeley student who is asked to comment on the same something with the same information on short notice and who has taken a few minutes to think of something to say. In other words, you have gone farther with your thinking than your first quick response or initial reaction—you have tried to deepen your thinking by turning it over in your mind critically. **This is part of a usually successful time formula for analysis: the individual who offers analysis has put as much or more care, resources, time and/or thought into the analysis than the person seeking it.** This is the essential matrix of an academic community.
- you have connected well with the material, it interests you, you have succeeded in conveying your interest in your comments (spoken or written) about it
- you have considered what the reader might be interested in, you are "reader aware" and are offering observations, interpretations and conclusions that you hope will be of interest and/or value to others

"useful"

Usefulness means either the writer has collected and organized data that others want, including doing all the work of that so others don't need to. Like interest, usefulness requires understanding what readers need and want to us.

"Useful" means that others (whomever you are writing for, that is, an imagined readership or, often, your classmates) find your work useful either in the information it provides or its insights in how to think about something.

credible secondary sources

Academically credible

When developing essays and similar written analytic work, I ask that the key points of your work will have relied on academically credible sources.

These meet the course grading standard of "academically credible sources":

- books published by academic presses that might be monographs or collections of essays, it doesn't matter
- articles from peer-reviewed / refereed journals (*see this website if you are unsure what a peer-reviewed journal is, and if you really need to know whether a journal is really peer-reviewed or not you can use the urlrichsweb.com mentioned in this article, if you navigate to it through an Oskicat search so that you are identified as a Berkeley member: https://www.angelo.edu/services/library/handouts/peerrev.php)
- almost anything (except crazy stuff) found using oskicat searches (books, eBooks, articles and so on—just HathiTrust.org might need some careful vetting)
  websites that have an identifiable author who you can *independently* confirm is qualified to publish on that topic

These usually do not meet the course grading standard of "academically credible sources":

- newspaper and general interest magazine articles
- website content with no obvious author
- blogs and similar content

Probably credible

A source is very likely to be "probably credible" it if your can identify the author and independently confirm that the author has a high level of credibility or expertise in the area relevant to how you are using that author.

Apparently credible

These sources are acceptable for common information and for getting yourself situated with a new topic. They are not appropriate as authoritative sources.

These are blogs or Wiki articles or web pages whose author you cannot identify or whose author you can identify but not independently confirm that the person is qualified to offer credible thought on the relevant topic or websites that are not definitely academic in the sponsorship but nevertheless seems well-researched, thoughtful, and academic or nearly academic in style and content. Some Wiki articles are in this category for example. (Others will be in the "not necessarily credible" category, below.) Many blogs in this category—for example, the author works as a website developer for a company but it writing on Daoism and seems to have an extended history of thinking about and reading about (including academic works) on the topic but has no publications or work history linking him to scholarly work on Daoism.

Not necessarily credible

These sources are acceptable when you want to quote opinions that we are not to think of as authoritative but instead as examples of opinions, such as the comments written beneath a YouTube video.

Casual blogs, most web pages that are introductory level or basic information, and social media content fall into this category as would anything where it does not seem that the author of the statement feels strongly compelled to be honest or accurate but is just sharing thoughts.

Further notes

Commonsense and good judgment are involved regarding when the source needs to meet this standard.

If the information is not central to your argument (such as whether *The Tale of Genji* was composed in 1008 or sometime shortly after 1020) you need be less diligent although care is always welcome. Or if the information you wish to quote is widely accepted, you either do not need a source or can quote from a more casual source if there is some need to do so. So, for example, if you write, "Premodern Japanese literature had a high regard for poetry," there is no need for a quote to support your claim.

But care is definitely required.

For example, in the first paragraph of the Wikipedia article on *The Tale of Genji* you can find this sentence, "While universally considered a masterpiece, its precise classification and influence in both Western and Eastern canon has been a matter of debate." This is reasonable. However, just before this, the same article asserts, "It is sometimes called the world's first novel, ..." which is an inaccuracy now perpetuated by Wiki, since the "novel" is a specific Western genre centuries away from invention and suggests a writing process and internal structure that are nothing like *The Tale of Genji*. Not only is this inaccurate, it tags YOU as the author as being unaware of some of the basics of the topic on which you are writing.

devices

Phones, tablets, laptops, and all other similar devices that can display text and/or be networked.

emergence

Emergence is a phenomenon that results from the complex interaction of multiple elements or factors. It is neither Factor A or Factor B or Result A+B but rather something unto itself that arises from the interaction of A + B. In my courses, for example, "emergent knowledge" might be how you newly understand something after a discussion of it with others.

informative title

An "informative title" is my way of requesting a specific type of title. It describes the basic content of the essay beyond just the topic, but includes the topic. It is different from "inviting" titles that are catchy or creative or mysterious. Informative titles tend to be a bit long and are often a bit awkward, but they do give an immediate sense of what the essay will be about in its specifics. Please compose your essays for an uninformed (just random out-of-the-blue) context —so not "Michizane's exile" (assuming the reading knows something about early Japanese history) but instead "The exile of the Japan's early Chinese scholar Michizane." The latter assumes that the reader encountering your title is seeing it out-of-context and knows nothing about Michizane. Use good judgement, however. Some topics are so famous that being specific seems condescending: "Medieval period critical essays on *The Bible*" is better than "Medieval period critical essays on the early Christian religious work called *The Bible*."

meta-features of a text

This is a word I am using according to my own definition, for the purposes of my courses. It is not connected to the large and complex discussions in literary discourse about terms such as "metanarrative," "metafiction," and so on.

By meta-features, I mean aspects of the text "above" or "beyond" the specific plot with its actions and outcomes and locatable places. It is the style, mood, tone, rhythm, implied significance, possible themes, underpinnings provided by worldviews or social values, and meaningful relationships that are intertextual (referencing other texts) or intercontextual (understanding derived from considering the writing context with a larger historical context, for example).

Meta-features are elements that help invite meaning but may be non-discursive or not locatable. They can be emergent effects. They might be the results of networks or patterns (such as how often and when a certain word is repeated). None are there in specific black-and-white segments of the text, but are plausible characteristics of the text nevertheless.

multitasking

Engaging in multiple activities as the same time. Multitasking is not bad; it keeps us alive. However, when attending to course content, multitasking dilutes comprehension.

narrowly defined topic (NDT)

A narrowly defined topic defines the focus and boundaries of the interpretive analysis that will be carried out. It has these key qualities:

It has a board portion, that helps the reader get situated in the relevant context and a specific portion that brings sharp focus in the direction the analysis will head. So, for example, "Women's contribution to the development of tea: The teachings of tea master Sen Rikyu's wife to women of Sakai Japan in the 17th-century."

Early in one's training, or when one is new to a topic, finding an essay topic that is neither too broad or too narrow is one of the most difficult of academic writing skills.

NDT are entirely free of prejudicial language, presumptions, conclusions, or suggestions of conclusions. It is, in other words, not a thesis statement. It is a crisp and specific articulation of the topic of analysis.

NDT avoid confusing language. They also avoid "fog" by suggesting or implying multiple topics. Instead, an NDT is a short, specific, and exceptionally clear as a statement. Beware, in particular, that it avoids “X and Y” and “X or Y” constructions except when truly necessary.

nativize / nativizing a concept

This is not a term I use very often any more but if I do it means taking something that is unfamiliar and giving it a new shape or interpretation that is more familiar, with (usually) an implicit criticism that this should not be one, since it subverts the opportunity to encounter something truly different or understand something or someone with truly different values or worldviews, or simply erases the interesting nuance that was part of the original.

"over the shoulder rule" — a course standard

In order for your use of a source to be considered (by me) "fair & accurate" it must pass this imagined, hypothetical situations: the author of what you are quoting is looking over your shoulder and sees how you use her or his words, and subjectively agrees that this is a "fair & accurate" representation of the author. Failing at the "over the shoulder rule" is not plagiarism, but it is academic misconduct when done intentionally and failing-level work when done in error.

overreach / sweeping statements

This is a credibility issue. When you use too little or too uncertain data to make a claim that is too large, this is overreach. For example, in a Japanese story you analyze, one lover lies to the other. Then you claim, "Japanese lie to each other in love relationships." Whether or not this is true is beside the point. The logic is weak and you will lose credibility with the reader. Sweeping statements are similar and have a similar effect on credibility since it seems that you, as the author, are uninterested in accuracy and too interested in making your point. In this case you attribute certain qualities to an entire class of objects in an improbably way. For example, "All Japanese have black hair," or "Every Berkeley student is smart."

plagiarism

See S2: *Academic integrity* for the full definition. In brief: "A statement made by you intentionally or by accident in contexts where the reader is likely to assume that the fact or idea presented is yours, when it is not." (According to this definition, you cannot plagiarize yourself. However, if you copy your own words in a situation where the instructor naturally expects you to develop new work, that is not plagiarism but it is academic misconduct.)

portfolio / grade portfolio

A grading scheme I sometimes use that collects the various exercises and assessments, using them systematically to determine three weighted component grades that then generate the

course grade. The three components are: knowledge (facts and concepts the student learns), skill (what the student learns to do), and engagement (active involvement in the class).

reading with thought and care

For my courses, reading a **literary work** with some "care and thought" means:

- to read it, not skim it, in full and more or less in a consecutive way (not jumping around)
- to understand the poem or story in its basic message (which includes plot)
- to understand the basic affective content and other internal (mental and emotional) events or positions of the poem or story
- to know (and then use) the names of the main characters,
- to put some time into considering the significance of the work in terms of its themes and other messages
- in some cases to consider how it succeeds as art, and
- where appropriate, to consider how the text fits in with other work being done in the class or other literary works that seem relevant.

For a student to read a **secondary source** with some "care and thought" means to read it for its primary theses and other analytic positions (main observations, interpretations, and main conclusions).

As for factual details, in either case above, if I expect that you capture anything beyond the most basic, I will say so.

term slippage

This is my generic term for certain types of false logic or rhetoric.

Term slippage is a type of undisciplined step in a logical argument, or a rhetorical strategy. Term slippage is when one word that represented a certain concept is later replaced with another word which is presented or treated as an equivalent, although in fact it introduces a slightly different or very different concept. The initial term has “slipped or shifted” with another term taking its place. Example:

> In L for Love L for Lies (Hong Kong, 2008), **beauty and grace** are the most important feminine values. Ah Keung falls for Ah Bo because of her **kind and trusting nature**.

This writer is implying that the personality traits “beauty and grace” are the same as the personality traits “kind and trusting.” This may or may not be true, but to slip from one set to the next raises confusions we do not want, is anyway probably inaccurate, and makes an argument simply by association, which is unconvincing to the careful reader (although quite effective as a rhetorical trick in other situations).

Another type of term slippage—more like a loose use of terms—that I sometime encounter in submission results from an oversimplified intermediary that generates a false conclusion: "This movie is sad. That movie is sad. They are similar." The problem here is that "sad" might mean in the first movie "a very dark film where everyone in pessimistic and in despair" and might mean in the second film "an outcome that makes one sad, such as the friend or lover dying". Both have been dumbed down to "sad," ignoring the complexities and textures of each and then, based on the summary word "sad," they are made to appear as if similar to one another. The dumbing down of the terms creates a similarity that really isn't that similar and certainly isn't useful.

texts

Although in my classes "texts" usually are literary objects this is not necessarily always the case. Modern literary theory has been liberal in defining what might be a text. For example, Roland Barthes argued that fashion is a system and has a grammar (*The Fashion System*, 1967) and so, in this sense, he offers fashion itself as a text. While my classes don't reach this far into theory, I am entirely comfortable with talking about the "text" of a film, which would be the film in its entire multimedia form, not just the script.

As stated elsewhere, "texts" are constructed entities, constructed by each of us as we interpret and attribute meaning and significance to "code."

worldviews / values / common practices

Values

In my theory of interpretation, "values" means ethical values upheld as ideals or expected behavior within a cultural group. "Don't snitch" is a value among mobsters. "Fairness is grading" is a value among instructor (hopefully). "No one really stops completely at this stop sign" could be a very local value shared by a limited group of people who all drive through a certain intersection frequently. Values set out **what one should do** (whether or not one really must do it is a separate issue). The member of a cultural group will be aware of the values of the group (though unevenly) since awareness of such values is exactly what it means to be a group member. Some values, however, can be so widespread in a culture that they are essentially unconscious and members are unaware that they are upholding a value.

Common practices

"Common practices" are also widely performed behavior within a group but may not raise ethical issues. Membership in a group includes learning what members of that group are likely to do in given situations.

In terms of behavior, it can be overdetermined; that is, it might be because it is a value or a common practice or both. Group members imitate the behavior of the group to some degree and probably are not reflective about why the behavior is expected so don't analyze it asking whether it is a value or a common practice.

Worldviews

"Worldviews" are unlike "values" in two important ways. First, they explain "**how the world works**" including "how the social world works" and the content of worldviews is considered self-evident and unassailably true. "Values" can be called into question. "Worldviews" rarely are and changing someone's worldview is exceptionally difficult. Second, worldviews are closer to that "air" of the cultural group—members are probably unaware of the content of their worldviews. They are just thinking of the world "naturally" and assume everyone things the same.

Further note

In my classes we often analyze towards identifying values or worldviews might be working implicitly to give shape to a text, or give shape to an interpretation of a text. However, we keep in mind that the reason may be no deeper than "Well, that's what people do in that group—it's a common practice."