

Annotation Notebook (50 points)

As we move through the semester, you will be asked to read a number of different kinds of texts, including novels, poetry, plays, and criticism. Each text will employ a different literary form, engage with a different theme, and/or make an argument about form. Your job is to identify these forms, themes, and arguments and respond to the text as if you were entering into a conversation with the author or speaker.

To help you along as you practice these skills, we will discuss each text in class, with special emphasis on argumentation. When preparing for these discussions, you will carefully read the assigned text and respond to the following prompts:

For primary texts:

- a. Note down your initial reactions. How does the text make you feel? Does it affect the way you think about yourself and the world?
- b. What are some cultural contexts you recognize? How might the reading help you better understand the Victorian period?
- c. What formal qualities do you notice? Is the writer using a lot of dialogue? Are there patterns or repetitions? Does the text seem more realistic or more fantastical? How might it relate formally to other texts we've read for the class?
- d. What questions do you have? List at least one.
- e. Pick one interesting passage to close read and bring it to class for discussion.

For secondary texts:

- a. List and define key terms, especially if they are new to you.
- b. Who or what is the subject of the text? In other words, who or what is the writer writing about? What is the writer's relationship to that subject?
- c. What is the main question or argument that the writer is exploring? Explain it in two sentences or less.
- d. What are key points of evidence that the writer uses to explore that question or argument?
- e. Pick one interesting passage that you do not understand and bring it to class for discussion.

I have created a Google Doc for each of you so that I can keep up with and respond to your annotations. The notebook is also a space where you can ask questions about the text and journal about your reading experience. I hope that it will help facilitate productive and engaging discussion in class and help you with your writing assignments throughout the semester.

Grading

One set of annotations will be due for each text that we read. For texts that we are only discussing once, including the criticism and poetry, you will annotate both for that day in class. For texts that we are reading of the course of several classes, I will ask you to sign up for a day or days to bring in your annotations for class discussions. Those are the days when your annotation for that text will be due.

I will be grading the Notebook based on completion and effort, so there are no wrong answers. That said, I do expect you to complete each set of annotations thoroughly and thoughtfully.