

Peer Review and Annotations (10%)

As we move through the semester, you will be asked to revise each of the three major writing assignments for the class. For part of that process, you will work with your peers to collaborate on your writing. Rather than look for surface level mistakes, however, I will be asking each of you to carefully annotate the writing of the other writers in your peer review groups (assigned in class). Treat your peers' writing as a text, just as you would a reading for this or any other class. Write in the margins, identify key points and arguments, and ask questions. Each essay will go through four rounds of review:

1. **Annotation:** For this step, you will annotate your own draft. You might do so while writing, or after writing, as a personal reflection on the choices you are making.

This step is an opportunity to show me and your peers why you made the choices you did. Include questions for me and your peers or comments that draw attention to an area you would like us to read more carefully or areas where you would like suggestions. In addition, consider how you would describe the genre you are writing in and complete a reverse outline according to the following instructions:

Choose two highlighter colors. Use one to identify where you make moves that your readers will expect, that follow the conventions of that genre. Use the other highlighter to identify where you do not meet those conventions. There should still be unhighlighted areas that you do not identify as the key areas of your essay. Return to the areas you highlighted with the second color and answer the question, *Why did I make this move?* Depending on your answer, determine if you need to revise.

2. **Peer Review:** We will go through this process together as a class with one of the sample essays provided. When working asynchronously peer review days, keep the revision process we have been working on in mind (errors, reverse outline, transitions). For the essay you are assigned to peer review, **write a reverse outline in the margins** as you make other comments. In addition to the reverse outline, ask questions and make comments. Your job is to respond to the text as if you were entering into a conversation with the writer. To get you started, I have provided the following questions. Identify these areas as you review by highlighting and adding a comment or question.
 - a. 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?
 - b. What is the main question or argument that the writer is exploring? Explain it in two sentences or less. Can you identify the thesis statement or argument?
 - c. What are key points of evidence that the writer uses to explore that question or argument?
 - d. If you had to choose one aspect of the text for the writer to work on, what would it be?
 - e. What is one aspect of the text that you might use to inform your own writing? In other words, what did the writer do well and could you learn from what they did in your own writing?

Keep in mind that revision is a large part of this class. I am not asking you to look for surface level corrections. I am instead asking you to enter into conversations with your peers about their writing style, their topic, their process, or any other aspect of their writing and research that you might notice.

3. **Instructor Annotations:** I will then go in and respond to your annotations and your peer's comments and questions. Once I am done, I will post your essay to the Peer Review discussion forum, so you can download it and review the comments.
4. **Final Submission:** No essay is perfect, not even a final draft. While your final submission should be polished and revised according to the annotations you received from your peers and from me, there may be some ways in which you could continue to revise. As such, your final submission will include all of the comments you received from me and your peers, as well as your responses to **all** of those comments. Even if the comment is something like "Good work!" you can still respond by explaining why you did what you did or reflecting on how you could replicate that good work in other parts of your essay.

These steps may seem like a lot of work, but they will become intuitive the more you practice them. Responding to your peers can and should take time, but it will result in your and your peers' development as writers and in a better grade in this and other classes.

Grading:

You will be graded on:

- Your initial annotations
- Your responses to your peer's annotations
- The ways in which you attend and respond to both peer and instructor annotations for your final submission. In other words, your revisions! Use the comments that your peers and I provide and either make changes accordingly or explain why you did not find the comment helpful. Don't worry, I won't be offended.
- The time and thought you put into your responses and revisions. There are no wrong answers, but your peers will rely on your comments as they make revisions and the conversations you have through your annotations will give me an idea of your own writing and interests. Please complete each peer review thoroughly and thoughtfully.

You will **not** be graded on:

- What you do or do not choose to revise. You do not have to do everything I say, so long as you have a reason for doing something different.
- How many comments you make in the Peer Review step. So long as they are thorough and show attention to your peer's writing, there is no right or wrong number of annotations.
- Whether or not your peers revise according to your comments. That is on them, and they may have a reason for doing something different.
- Inability to complete a peer review because your peer did not turn in their essay; however, if your peer turns in an incomplete draft or another step in the process like an outline, you can and should still respond to whatever they have turned in. Even an outline can be annotated.