

**Final Paper/Creative Project:
Art and Literature in the Time of Pandemic**
(due: Wednesday 5/6 by 11:59 pm EST)

This semester, we have been studying literature written out of the crisis of a global pandemic. From *The Normal Heart* to *Pose* to Danez Smith's poetry, these texts invite us to ask fundamental questions, such as: what is the value of literature and art in a pandemic? How can art help us bear witness, reflect on, and engage with contemporary crises? How can the tools of language help us confront our feelings of fear, uncertainty, and hope? While these questions are always urgent, I think we can all agree that they strike a particularly resonant chord in our current moment.

For your final paper or project, I want to give you the space to reflect further on the question I posed on Canvas when we first went online: **what is the value (if any) of literature and the arts during a pandemic?** You may answer this question in **one of two ways** (see below):

Option 1: Paper

You may choose to answer this question in the form of a traditional academic essay (**4-5 pages**). Please choose **one or two course texts** to help support your argument. The bulk of your essay should consist of your **close readings of specific moments** from the texts you choose, which you will use to support your thesis about the role of art/literature in a pandemic. The challenge here will be to avoid vague generalizations and to focus instead on specific, concrete examples from course texts.

As always, your paper should be double-spaced, 12-pt. font, 1" margins, MLA format 8th edition (Works Cited page and in-text citations).

*Works Cited page does not count towards the page limit

Option 2: Creative Project & Reflection Essay

We are living in the midst of our own pandemic, a pandemic that will undoubtedly produce its own canon of art and literature. I want to give you the opportunity to create your own artistic or literary response to the COVID-19 pandemic. You may choose to create visual art, poetry, creative nonfiction, music, a blog, a film, a YouTube video – whatever you're moved to make – that reflects *your* experience of our current pandemic.

You must write a **short reflection essay (2 pages, double-spaced)** to accompany your creative work. In this essay, you should tell us:

- a) Why you made the artistic choices you made (using specific examples from your *own* "text")
- b) Your answer to the question above (the value of art/literature in a pandemic), based on your experience creating this work

Details:

You have **two deadlines** to keep track of for this project:

- 1) **One-on-one meeting:** During the **week of 4/27**, you will each **meet with me one-on-one** via Zoom to discuss your final paper/project. **At least one hour before your meeting, please send me EITHER:**
 - a. **A thesis statement and at least one analysis paragraph (for paper option)**
OR
 - b. **A detailed plan for your project and a 1-page outline for your reflection essay (project option)**

You can sign up for your meeting on the Google Doc [here](#), and the link to my Zoom meeting room is [here](#).

(These links are also on the online schedule on Canvas).

- 2) **Paper/project itself:** Your final paper or project is due **WEDNESDAY 5/6 by 11:59 pm EST (submit via Canvas).***

**Remember that I cannot accept ANY late work for the class after Friday 5/8 at 11:59 pm EST.*

Rubrics:

This assignment is worth 150 points. Here are the rubrics:

PAPER (150 points):

- Draft and conference (50 points): did you attend your Zoom conference? Did you submit your draft at least 1 hour before your conference?
- Final paper (100 points):
 - Claim and stakes (30 points): does your essay present a clear, arguable, and compelling claim? Do you articulate the *stakes* of your argument (the “so what”)?
 - Evidence and analysis (40 points): do you incorporate evidence from the text? Do you carefully and thoroughly analyze the evidence you use? Does the evidence support your claim? Do you draw explicit connections between your evidence and the claim?
 - Organization (15 points): do your paragraphs follow a logical flow? Do you include topic sentences that help guide the reader through your paper and connect each paragraph back to your argument?
 - Style (10 points): is your writing clear and coherent? Is it relatively free of grammatical or spelling errors?
 - Citation (5 points): do you correctly cite your sources according to MLA 8th edition style? (both in-text and works cited)

PROJECT (150 points):

- Draft and conference (50 points): did you attend your Zoom conference? Did you

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submit your draft at least 1 hour before your conference?

-Creative project (40 points):

-Does your project reflect a thoughtful, thorough engagement with our current historical moment? Does it reflect creativity and originality?

-Reflection paper (60 points):

-Does your reflection paper tell us...

a) Why you made the artistic choices you made (using specific examples from your *own* "text")?

b) Your answer to the question above (the value of art/literature in a pandemic), based on your experience creating this work?

-Is your reflection paper clearly and coherently written and relatively free of spelling and grammatical errors?