

*Assignment #1*  
**THE TEXTUAL ANALYSIS ESSAY**  
*English 101 – Sections 121 & 135*  
*Instructor Sung Ohm*  
*Fall 2004*

***On Analysis:***

A strong analysis requires thinking critically about the subject at hand. The authors in A Student's Guide to First-Year Composition state, "In order to analyze you need to think critically, which means that you *examine* your interpretations, assumptions, opinions, and judgments in order to understand and question them." So not only does an analysis require you to investigate the text, but it also requires you to be critical of your own subject-position—your ideologies, assumptions, cultural values, etc.

Analysis requires that you break down the text and look at the relationship between the parts and the whole. Furthermore, it does not only look for the *meaning* of a text, but it also seeks to answer the *how* and the *why*? For instance, you might ask yourself the following questions: How is the meaning being conveyed? How does the text work? Why is the author saying what she or he says? Why does the author choose the subject? What are the ethics behind the text and how does the text reveal the ethical dilemmas? These questions are merely suggestive and certainly not exhaustive—you should try to work on your own series of questions that might help you better understand and interpret the text.

***The Assignment:***

The textual analysis essay is a way for you to demonstrate your ability to develop a clear interpretation of a text based on evidence from the text itself and on the method of analysis used. For this assignment you will analyze The Communist Manifesto by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. In your essay, take a critical and well-informed position, and argue a particular interpretation(s) of the text reached by your analysis. Make sure you provide enough context and evidence for your arguments and claims.

This essay is a relatively short paper (4-6 pages); therefore, you'll need to focus your paper. A more focused paper makes for a stronger paper. Try to figure out how best to confine your paper within such a limited amount of space. To narrow down your paper, you might consider basing your paper on something that may have sparked your interest, a theme that you see running throughout the Manifesto, or a concept and/or argument that you want to wrestle with. Remember that an analysis is not based just on the text, but also seeks to analyze, discover, and interrogate the writer's own values, beliefs, ideologies, assumptions, and prejudices.

Make sure you choose a specific passage or specific passages from the text. *Do not attempt to analyze the entire text.* An adequate analysis of the entire Manifesto would require you to write a lengthy paper (say, perhaps, somewhere between twenty to a hundred pages as many analysis essays of the Manifesto are). Therefore, choose particular sections prudently; base your selection of texts on your major argument(s) and the focus of your paper. Despite your focus, you must have a strong grasp of the entire Manifesto to do an adequate job of analyzing the text.

Before you begin the formal writing process, make sure you have read and clearly understand the chapters on "Close Reading," "Analysis" and "Written Textual Analysis" from A Student's Guide to First-Year Composition. These chapters should give you a good idea about what is expected in this assignment.

***Details:***

Write a well-organized, thought-out, critical analysis essay. It should be 4-6 pages standard academic format—double-spaced, approximately one-inch margins, 12-point Times font (or equivalent font), and no cover page (see Rules for Writers for specifics on academic format). Make sure to have 3-4 copies for peer critique workshops. *See the course schedule for due dates.*