**299 Unit One Essay Prompts**

For your unit one essay, choose from the following prompts. Essays should be submitted on Moodle as a .doc or .docx file (*not* .pages) and should be 900-1200 words, double spaced, 12 pt. Times New Roman (or similar). Citations may be in MLA or Chicago style. Essays should engage an academic writing style (using appropriate grammar and punctuation, complete sentences, etc.) and should offer an argument.   
  
Remember that all of your sources should be peer reviewed (if you search in BSC library’s system, you can sort your results by peer reviewed sources, mostly academic books and journal articles) and that at least one of them must be a source we did not read for class. That source may come from the supplemental readings, the bibliography of something we did read in class, or your own searches.

If you have questions about what any of that means, please reach out!

**Prompt 1**

**There is a saying that “form follows function,” meaning that the form of something reflects what it was intended to do. Choosing one of the plays or musicals in this unit, explore the relationship between the play’s formatting and its message – how are the two related? How does the way the play is structured help it get its point across? If the play’s form and message seem divergent, why/do you suggest the playwright did that, and what are the effects?** (Feel free to think about form dimensionally – the way the plot is structured is an important facet of form, but the kinds of language used, the kinds of actors called for in the character description, and physical elements required by the playwright might also fall under that umbrella. Note that you are also making an argument about the point of the play.)  
**Pro tip:** Somewhere near the end of your first paragraph you should be able to have a one-sentence thesis statement stating your argument followed by a mapping of how you’re going to prove that your opinion is valid. “In this essay, I contend that the repetitive nature of the narrative in ‘Goldilocks and the Three Bears’ is indicative of the playwright’s goal to call attention to the constructed nature of social identity. I begin by X, then Y, and conclude by Z.”

**Prompt 2**

**In Unit 0, we explored differences between something being “gay” and being “queer.” For this essay, you’ll look back to the queer theory we read in Unit 0 as well as this unit’s supplemental texts to do one of the following:**

* **Choose a play or musical from this unit and offer an analysis of the ways in which it is specifically gay and/or queer and *why this distinction is important for that particular work.*** Who is this piece by? Who is this piece for? What work is this piece doing with its gayness or queerness, and how do we decide if that work is worth doing?
* **Choose a play from this unit, choose a particular element of queer theory (perhaps Butler’s gender construction, one of the tools of queering Sullivan lays out, or something from a supplemental reading in Unit 0 – abjection, queerness as a phenomenological lens, etc.), and use one to illuminate the other.** This means that your argument is probably going to be something along the lines of either “I suggest that [play] offers a meaningful example of [theory]” or “I engage [theory] as a lens to demonstrate [something nifty and new] about [play].”

Is there a paper that’s been bubbling in your brain that doesn’t fit either of these prompts? Come to office hours or email me with an abstract of the paper you’re interested in writing and let’s talk!