

## Formal Assignment #2

### The Think-Piece: Using Academic Lenses to See the World Differently

#### Description:

Perhaps the most thrilling part of entering an academic conversation is the opportunity to see the world differently: Academic dialogue provides arguments for other authors to engage with and ways of seeing the world for other authors to use. Once these approaches are created, they can be used by other writers to help us see what's around us in a deeper, more complex way. This assignment asks you to explore that process of illuminating the world by working with the ideas of some of the writers we have discussed in class. Taking it one step further than attempting to reveal a new way of thinking to other academics, this assignment will ask you to apply these authors' thinking to a recent pop-culture phenomenon, trying to help the average person see the world through the eyes of an academic.

For this assignment, you will be playing the role of an academic contacted by the editor of a popular online periodical (e.g., Vox; The Atlantic). As they get ready for the run for Valentine's Day, the magazine would like to invite readers to think about some more complex ways of thinking about love, and have asked you to write a brief piece sharing your thoughts about the great theories out there using well-known source material to get readers' attention. Their goal is that you demonstrate for them how a set of theories in conversation can give life to some that others might take for granted. Given that this will be posted to a website, the editors expect you to:

- curate images/graphs/video clips that will help serve your argument and carry the reader through
- come up with a catchy title that conveys your argument while drawing readers in
- use an example relationship that would be widely known

Try and present how a famous romance (e.g., movie, TV, literary; not restricted to class material) reveals a deep truth about love. To do this, you will be asked to use arguments of at least two of the thinkers we have discussed in class (e.g., Buss; Freud; Plato) to demonstrate to the reader how this famous couple helps us understand their theories. Try to place these thinkers in dialogue with one another by (1) exploring ways that their thinking complements and builds off of one another; (2) highlighting ways they might offer different takes on the same phenomenon; (3) or reveals a common limitation to both theories.

Note, that placing the authors in dialogue will require more than just applying one model at a time. Create a clear thesis statement that explains how they fit together: Does one framework explain the relationship *better*? Do the arguments do a better job together than alone? Does the relationship help reveal one way they both overlap? Do both thinkers fail to explain the relationship for some shared reason?

#### Audience:

Readers with no background knowledge of the existing academic conversations on love, but with a *thorough* knowledge of whatever pop-culture phenomenon you are discussing thanks to hours of rewatching. These readers, however, are coming to you for your "expert" opinion, and still expect clear, academic prose.

#### Learning Objectives/Grading Criteria:

- *Thoughtful analysis of the arguments made by the two writers you discuss*
- *Effective application of their theories to an existing relationship*
- *Clear, guiding thesis statement*
- *Effective use of evidence from target material*
- *Effective integration of theories from prior thinkers*
- *Appropriate use of supporting images and/or clips*

#### Deadlines

*First Draft due 2/28/17 at the beginning of class.*

*Peer Review due 3/2/17 at the beginning of class.*

*Final Draft due 3/19/17 by 11:59PM*

#### Submission Guidelines:

This assignment should be written in standard American English. It will be submitted to the class blog-page, with all posts made by class time on the due date. It should consist of 1000-1500 words of prose. Citations should be presented in a style appropriate to an online resources (e.g., nested links; footnotes).