

Essay #1 Prompts

Choose a prompt and write a concise, persuasive, compelling essay that features a strong thesis statement and evidence of close reading, analytical rigor, and thought about form.

Do not just “answer” the prompt; take a position that arises from careful thought about how best to respond to it.

1. Relate Georg Simmel’s theory of the blasé attitude to TS Eliot’s poetry, and/or to Virginia Woolf’s novel.
2. Raymond Williams states that the “key cultural factor of the modernist shift is the character of the metropolis” and that the “most important general element of the innovations in form is the fact of immigration to the metropolis” (45). Discuss these claims in relation to one or more of the works we’ve studied.
3. What is Raymond Williams critiquing in the selections we read?
4. Discuss the dichotomy between the city and the country, and/or the breakdown of that dichotomy, in work by one, two, or three of our writers.
5. Discuss how the act of walking through city streets informs writing by one or two of the following: Virginia Woolf, William Wordsworth, Walter Benjamin, and/or TS Eliot.
6. How do Walter Benjamin and Friedrich Engels position themselves in relation to the urban geographies that are their subject matter?
7. Discuss the city as a space for the circulation of commodities in work by Virginia Woolf, TS Eliot, and/or Walter Benjamin.
8. Discuss what reference to the specific geography of London does for TS Eliot’s *The Waste Land* and/or Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway*. This will likely require research.
9. Why is work by TS Eliot and/or Virginia Woolf difficult to read at first?

NB

- Guidelines outlining best practices for literature papers are available on our website.
- Your paper must be 5-7 double-spaced pages, in a 12 pt. font.
- The citation system is MLA.
- Late papers lose 1% of the course total per day

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