

### Essay 2: Comparative Analysis

**Description:** Rough Draft Tues, 23 April 2013 6—7 pages 25 points (completion credit) 3 copies  
Final Draft Thurs, 25 April 2013 6—7 pages 250 points  
*Submit 1 copy of final draft, 1 copy of rough draft, and the completed peer review sheets.*

#### Assignment

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Compare and contrast the ways in which Junot Diaz's *The Brief Wonderous Life of Oscar Wao* and Toni Morrison's *Beloved* approach a shared thematic concern.

**Alternative Assignment:** You may choose to compare either *Brief Wonderous* or *Beloved* to any of the other novels we have read this semester. *Your choice must be cleared with me via email before 5:00 on Monday 4/16.* Include in the email which text you want to use and what issue/theme you will address. If I do not hear from you before this deadline, I will assume that you will write about Diaz and Morrison and will hold you to that assumption.

#### Strategies

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In this last essay, then, you must choose a **theme** around which to focus your argument and compare Diaz's and Morrison's novels in terms of what each says about this shared theme. When writing a comparative analysis, it's important to justify *why* you're comparing these two texts. In other words, comparing these texts should allow you to produce an insight about your paper's topic that you wouldn't be able to produce if you examined only one of your texts in isolation.

You do not need to give equal weight to each text, nor do you have to devote equal space to exploring similarities and differences. You can choose to emphasize similarity over difference, difference over similarity, or one text over the other (you must discuss both texts in the body of your paper, however). Regardless of what you choose to emphasize, your thesis must clearly map out your comparison and illustrate that comparison's purpose. Below are a few common ways of doing this:

- [Text A] and [Text B] both explore [theme], but [Text A] suggests [X] while [Text B] suggests [Y].
- Although [Text A] and [Text B] initially exhibit [similarity/difference X] in their representation of [theme], ultimately they reveal [crucial difference/similarity Y].
- While [Text A] represents [theme] in [X way], [Text B] represents it in [Y way], a difference that serves to illuminate [Z].

As with Essay 1, support your argument with close readings of carefully chosen evidence from the novels. Do not consult outside sources for this paper—I'm interested in reading your thoughts about these texts.

#### Format

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Paper formatting, citations, and works cited list follow MLA style: 12-point Times New Roman font; double-spaced; stapled; header on first page including your name, course, instructor name, date, and assignment title. Acknowledgements section, if any, should appear as a footnote on the first page.

## Criteria for Evaluation

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- Thoughtful, specific thesis that moves beyond (or complicates) classroom discussion, effectively states the essay's argument, and directs the remainder of the essay.
- Effective selection and incorporation of quoted evidence from both texts.
- Clear, compelling explanation of how each quotation supports and/or complicates the thesis.
- Organization, paragraph development, and transitions contribute to a logical flow of ideas.
- Addresses a reader who knows the texts but interprets them differently than the essay writer.
- Includes acknowledgements section describing any assistance you had developing ideas or polishing the paper.
- Attentive to language and clarity: readable style with correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and MLA citation.