

EXPOS 20: WHY SHAKESPEARE?

SESSION TWO: WHAT IS ACADEMIC WRITING?

Reading for Today:

- [The Why Shakespeare? Syllabus](#)
- [Harvard Writing Resources](#)
- William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (1599): Act I

Writing Due:

- [Start of Term Writer's Letter](#)
- Sign up for [Meet-and-Greet Office Hours](#) and [Optional Hamlet Screening](#).

In-Class Discussions:

- *Course, Canvas, Campus*: Very briefly discuss any questions or problems regarding the course or the website, as well as the writing resources available to students at Harvard.
- "To thine own self be true": In a guided conversation, spend 30 minutes talking about six words, "To thine own self be true," as a way to discuss what academic writing is, isn't, does, and doesn't do.
- *Our Course Argument*: Discuss what academic writing is and some of its features.
- *The Elements of Academic Argument*: Briefly introduce the [Elements of Academic Argument](#).
- *The Hamlet Syndrome*: Illustrate the Elements of Academic Argument in a reading of *Hamlet*.
- *Plagiarism*: Introduce and briefly discuss the idea of plagiarism, especially the importance of originality.

Aphorisms (introduced in class, to be completed after class):

- [Aphorisms for Students](#)
- [Aphorisms on Academic Writing](#)
- [Aphorisms on Writing in College](#)
- [Aphorisms on Writing Across the Curriculum](#)

Assignments:

- [What Needs Close Reading](#): Jot down a short list of topics you think need to receive "close readings."
- [Not Using Sources](#): In small groups, paraphrase and analyze Hamlet's famous "To be, or not to be" speech.
- [Reading Writing Assignments](#): In preparation for our next class, submit on Canvas and bring to class a writing assignment (i.e., the prompt, not your actual paper) you've received from another class (past or present).



COURSE, CANVAS, CAMPUS WRITING RESOURCES





“TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE”



“TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE”

What is the meaning of “To thine own self be true”?

Key Terms

- *Self*
 - Who a person really is (as opposed to what someone appears to be); someone’s *essence, soul, mind, spirit, nature*
- *True*
 - *Faithful*, in contrast to disloyal; *honest*, in contrast to deceitful; *accurate to reality*, as in a true-or-false quiz.
- *Meaning*
 - Significance or sense; intent.



“TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE”

“TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE”

William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (ca. 1599),:

Oph. I shall the effect of this good lesson keep,
As watchman to my heart. But, good my brother,
Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,
Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven;
Whiles, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,
And recks not his own rede. (1.3.44-50)

“TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE”



William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (ca. 1599):

[Pol.] Give thy thoughts no tongue,
Nor any unproportioned thought his act.
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.
Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel;
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
Of each new-hatch'd, unfledged comrade. Beware
Of entrance to a quarrel, but being in,
Bear't that the opposed may beware of thee.
Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice;
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment.
Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
But not express'd in fancy; rich, not gaudy;
For the apparel oft proclaims the man,
And they in France of the best rank and station
Are of a most select and generous chief in that.
Neither a borrower nor a lender be;
For loan oft loses both itself and friend,
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.
This above all: to thine ownself be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man. (1.3.56-79)

“TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE”

William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (ca. 1599):

[*Pol.*] I must tell you,
You do not understand yourself so clearly
As it behoves my daughter and your honor. (1.3.94-96)

Oph. I do not know, my lord, what I should think.

Pol. Marry, I'll teach you: **think yourself a baby.** (1.3.103-04)

“TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE”

Thomas Traherne, “Nature” (ca. 1674)::

A Secret self I had enclosed within,
That was not bounded with my Clothes or Skin. (19-20)

David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739):

There are some philosophers, who imagine we are every moment intimately conscious of what we call our SELF; that we feel its existence and its continuance in existence; and are certain, beyond the evidence of a demonstration, both of its perfect identity and simplicity.... But setting aside some metaphysicians of this kind, I may venture to affirm of the rest of mankind, that they are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement. (1.436-39)

“TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE”

William James, *The Principles of Psychology* (1890):

Properly speaking, *a man has as many social selves as there are individuals who recognize him and carry an image of him in their mind.... He has as many different social selves as there are distinct groups of persons about whose opinion he cares.* (1.294)

Charles Horton Cooley, *Human Nature and the Social Order* (1902):

A social self of this sort might be called the reflective or looking-glass self. (152)

Robert Bierstedt, *The Social Order: An Introduction to Sociology*, 4th ed. (1974):

I am not what I think I am and I am not what you think I am. I am what I think you think I am. (197)

Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959):

The self ... is not an organic thing that has a specific location, whose fundamental fate is to be born, to mature, to die; it is a dramatic effect arising diffusely from a scene that is presented. (252)

“TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE”



“TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE”

1. Can you provide some examples—from history, other literature, personal experience, etc.—of persons who believe, or don't believe, that humans have a “self”—an *essence, soul, spirit, nature, who we really and truly are*?
2. Do you personally think you have a “self” that is real and permanent? What changes if you answer “yes” vs. “no”?
3. What factors play into someone's belief that they do or do not have a “self”?
4. What are some examples where different definitions of “the self” have mattered in history,?
5. What are some examples where different definitions of “the self” would matter in the day-to-day lives we lead?

“TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE”



WHAT NEEDS CLOSE READING? (ASSIGNMENT)

What Needs Close Reading?

Published

Edit



Objectives

This short activity is designed to help us start a conversation about the benefits of a required first-year writing course.

Assignment

Write a list of three things you think need to receive a "close reading."

Instructions

A close reading, something which can certainly be done outside literary studies, is probably the most common type of writing assignment in college, certainly the most important, but also one of the hardest. A close reading is an analysis of a single text (or idea, event, object, etc.) that identifies and discusses some interesting or problematic aspect of that text (or idea, event, object, etc.) without recourse to any other texts. So you can do a "close reading" of your move-in day at Harvard (an event), the freedom of speech (an idea), or the architecture of Widener Library (an object). But in a close reading, it's just you and your topic, and it's your job to make sense of your topic. New things can be said about old topics that have already received plenty of attention from "the experts," and a close reading requires someone to wrestle with a topic him- or herself rather than scour the published criticism in the library or, even worse, the ideas floating around on the Internet (e.g., *Sparknotes* and *Wikipedia*).

You don't have to have a PhD to say something new about Shakespeare or any other well-known topic. All it takes to write a close reading is an interesting topic and a willingness to explore it beyond its most obvious features.

In the space below, write down three things (texts, ideas, events, objects, etc.) that you think need to have close readings done of them. You can go "big" (with historical, political, or social problems) or "small" (with personal or local issues). Your topics might relate to the sciences or to the humanities, but the central question is what – for you – needs to be better understood. So just identify – as you look at your life and our world – the things you think most need to be interpreted. (These don't need to have long, elaborate explanations: just three quick sentences, or even half-sentences, to get our conversations going.)



COURSE ARGUMENT



COUNTER-ARGUMENTS TO EXPOS 20

- We already learned how to write in high school.
- It's a bunch of busywork
- If I want to study rats in a lab, how will writing about Shakespeare help me?
- There should be a way to “test out.”
- We want to study content, not form (i.e., Shakespeare, not essay structure).
- The elements are too mechanistic.

THE QUESTION/PROBLEM EXPOS 20 RESPONDS TO

- Given these counter-arguments, why does this university, like most, require a first-year writing course?

DEFINING TERMS: WHAT IS “ACADEMIC WRITING”?

Kind of Writing		Purpose
Public	Creative	To entertain
	Journalistic	To inform
	Transactional	To get things done
Academic		?

DEFINING TERMS: WHAT IS “ACADEMIC WRITING”?

A hypothesis...

Academic writing is about one thing,
and one thing only:

the search for truth.

DEFINING TERMS: WHAT IS “ACADEMIC WRITING”?

Derek Bok, *Our Underachieving Colleges: A Candid Look at How Much Students Learn and Why They Should Be Learning More* (2006):

College brochures are filled with commitments to help develop such virtues as racial tolerance, honesty, and social responsibility. Some prominent professors, however, have publicly argued that colleges should occupy themselves solely with developing the knowledge and intellectual capabilities of their students and not attempt to foster values and behaviors. (41)

Stanley Fish, *Save the World on Your Own Time* (2008):

The view I am offering of higher education is properly called deflationary; it takes the air out of some inflated balloons. It denies to teaching the moral and philosophical pretensions that lead practitioners to envision themselves as agents of change. (53)

Neither the university as a collective nor its faculty as individuals should advocate personal, political, moral, or any other kind of views except academic views. (19)

Telling the truth is what the public expects us to be doing. If you're not in the pursuit-of-truth business, you should not be in the university. (20)

To academicize a topic is to detach it from the context of its real world urgency, where there is a vote to be taken or an agenda to be embraced, and insert it into a context of academic urgency, where there is an account to be offered or an analysis to be performed. (27)

To academicize an issue is to detach it from those contexts where it poses a choice of what to do or how to live – shall I join the priesthood or join the army? – and insert it into an academic context where it invites a certain kind of interrogation. What is its history? Why has it been thought significant? What are the prevailing answers to the questions it raises? Where do those answers come from?

DEFINING TERMS: WHAT IS “ACADEMIC WRITING”?

Historians Against Trump, “An Open Letter to the American People” (July 11, 2016):

Today, we are faced with a moral test. As historians, we recognize both the ominous precedents for Donald J. Trump’s candidacy and the exceptional challenge it poses to civil society. ... We have a professional obligation as historians to share an understanding of the past upon which a better future may be built.

Stanley Fish, “Professors, Stop Opining About Trump” (July 15, 2017):

Academic expertise is not a qualification for delivering political wisdom.

DEFINING TERMS: WHAT IS “ACADEMIC WRITING”?

1. Can you provide some examples of when professors have been analytical (trying to describe what is true and why) or ethical and political (trying to make the world a better place)?
2. In your classes, do you want your professors to be analytical or ethical and political?
3. How would you characterize the relationship between academia and politics in the United States today?
4. What are the pitfalls of a purely analytical approach to academic writing? What are the dangers of an overly ethical or political approach?
5. How should we respond to these questions in the context of our very specific political moment in America in 2020?

DEFINING TERMS: WHAT IS “ACADEMIC WRITING”?

- The Search for Truth
- Academic Writing is Analytical Writing
- Say Something New
- How to Say Something New
- Be Unusual
- Writing as a Discipline

See Aphorisms on Academic Writing

THE THESIS OF EXPOS 20

On Our Syllabus:

Rhetoric is a prerequisite for the successful pursuit of knowledge. That is, rhetoric, understood as the study of modes of interpretation and persuasion, is needed regardless of the discipline or field you plan to pursue because rhetoric equips you with the forms and strategies of thought and speech that you'll use to investigate and discuss material specific to your academic endeavors, whatever they may be.

Our New Course Thesis:

While “writing” is traditionally understood as the expression of thought, Expos 20 redefines “writing” as the very thought-process itself. Writing is not what you do with thought. Writing is thinking.

THE METHOD OF EXPOS 20

- Emphasis on process, not product.
- Readings, discussions, response papers, drafts, conferences, workshops, and revisions.

THE METHOD OF EXPOS 20



THE IMPLICATIONS OF EXPOS 20

How will your writing change in college?

1. There will be a shift from the five-paragraph essay to more sophisticated organizational structures.
2. There will be a shift from understanding a “research paper” as a book report that synthesizes what other writers have said and “picks a side” to understanding it as an original argument that is situated in an ongoing academic conversation.
3. There will be a shift from readings that moralize life lessons to those that analyze evidence in and for a specific discipline.
4. There will be a shift from surface or conventional arguments that try to “get the text right” based on your teacher’s understanding of it to imaginative, creative, playful, risky, independent arguments.
5. There will be a shift from writing about literature to writing about everything.

See the *Aphorisms on Writing in College*



THE ELEMENTS OF ACADEMIC ARGUMENT



THE ELEMENTS OF ACADEMIC ARGUMENT

What does all academic writing include?

- Question/Problem
- Method
- Evidence
- Analysis
- Argument
- Structure
- Stakes/Implications

See Aphorisms on Writing Across the Curriculum



THE HAMLET SYNDROME



THE HAMLET SYNDROME

William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (ca. 1599):

Here, as before, never, so help you mercy,
How strange or odd soe'er I bear myself,
As I perchance hereafter shall think meet
To put an antic disposition on,
That you, at such times seeing me, never shall,
With arms encumber'd thus, or this headshake,
Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,
As 'Well, well, we know,' or 'We could, an if we would,'
Or 'If we list to speak,' or 'There be, an if they might,'
Or such ambiguous giving out, to note
That you know aught of me. (1.5.172-82)

THE HAMLET SYNDROME

Saxo Grammaticus, *Historiae Danicae* (12th c.):

Such good fortune stung Feng with jealousy, so that he resolved treacherously to waylay his brother, thus showing that goodness is not safe even from those of a man's own house. And behold, when a chance came to murder him, wish lowly hand sated the deadly passion of his soul. Then he took the wife of the brother he had butchered, capping unnatural murder with incest....

Amleth beheld all this, but feared lest too shrewd a behavior might make his uncle suspect him. So he chose to feign dulness, and pretend an utter lack of wits. This cunning worse not only concealed his intelligence but ensured his safety. (62)

THE HAMLET SYNDROME

Stephen Greenblatt, “The Death of Hamnet and the Making of *Hamlet*” (2004):

In order to grow to adulthood—to survive long enough to be able to exact revenge—Amleth feigned madness, persuading his uncle that he could never pose a danger.... By excising the strategic rationale for Hamlet’s madness, Shakespeare made it the central focus of the entire tragedy.

THE HAMLET SYNDROME

Zachary D. Torry and Stephen B. Billick, “Overlapping Universe: Understanding Legal Insanity and Psychosis” (2010):

Insanity is a legal term rather than a psychiatric or scientific one. Black’s Law Dictionary defines it as ‘any mental disorder severe enough that it prevents a person from having legal capacity and excuses the person from criminal or civil responsibility. Insanity is a legal, not a medical, standard.’ It is a disorder that impairs the human mind and prevents distinguishing between actions that are right or wrong. Mental illnesses are disorders of the brain that disrupt a person’s thinking, feeling, moods, and ability to relate to others. They are brain disorders resulting in a diminished capacity for coping with the demands of life. (255)

THE HAMLET SYNDROME

William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (ca. 1599):

○ that this too too sullied flesh would melt,
That, and resolve itself into a dew,
Or that the Everlasting had not fixed
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter. ○ God, God,
How weary, stale, flatt, and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses of this world! (1.2.129-34)

THE HAMLET SYNDROME

William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (ca. 1599):

O fie! Hold, hold, my heart,
And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,
But bear me up stiffly. Remember thee!
Ay, thou poor ghost, whiles memory holds a seat
In this distracted globe. (1.5.93-97)

THE HAMLET SYNDROME

Eleanor Prosser, *Hamlet and Revenge* (1967):

Hamlet is not mad. He never is.... [He] never loses touch with reality.... He always knows what he is doing. (149)

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Shakespeare, with Introductory Matter on Poetry, the Drama, and the Stage* (1853):

Hamlet's wildness is but half false; he plays that subtle trick of pretending to act only when he is very near really being what he acts. (156)

THE HAMLET SYNDROME

THE HAMLET SYNDROME

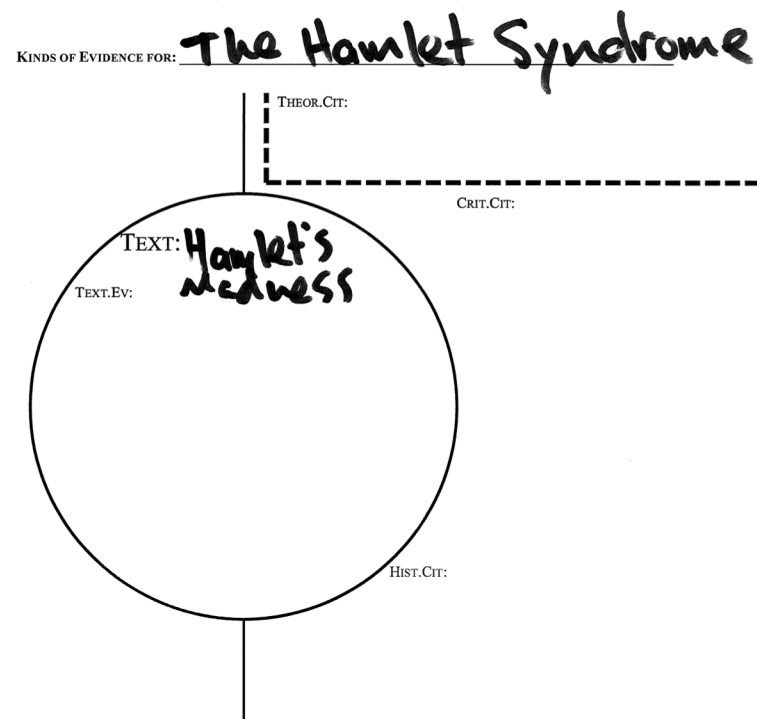
1. How can modern concepts like mental illness and insanity help us better understand Shakespeare's early-modern text *Hamlet*?
2. How might Shakespeare's *Hamlet* help us better understand modern concepts like mental illness and legal insanity?
3. What other modern ideas and events could we put in conversation with Act I of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*?



ACADEMIC WRITING IN ACTION

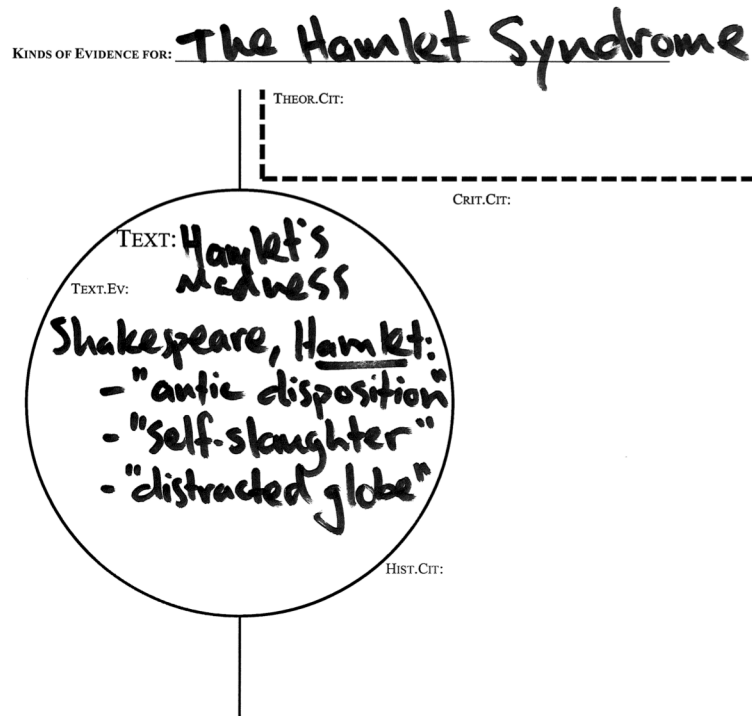


THE KINDS OF EVIDENCE IN ACTION



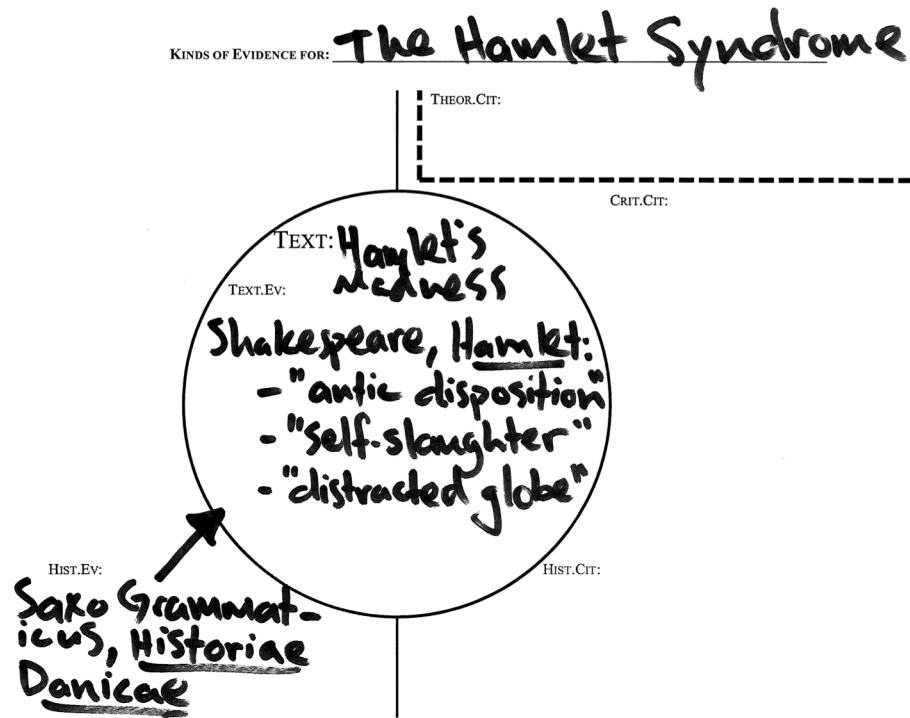
Text: The thing being interpreted.

THE KINDS OF EVIDENCE IN ACTION



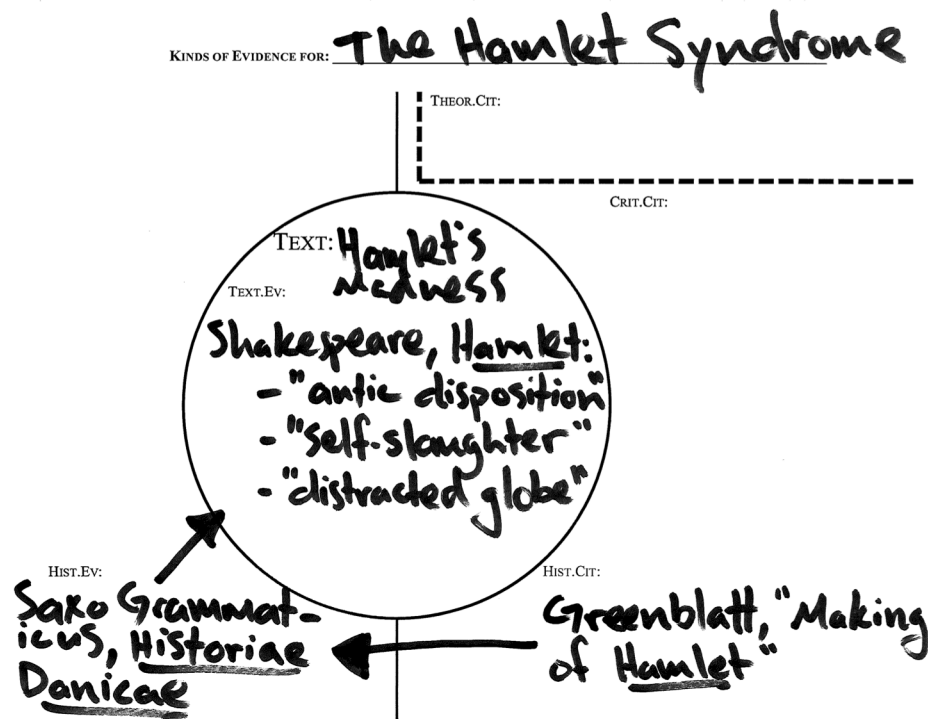
Textual Evidence: Facts, examples, details, quotes, etc. drawn from the text.

THE KINDS OF EVIDENCE IN ACTION



Historical Evidence: Quotations and examples drawn from things that occurred prior to or roughly contemporaneously with the composition of the text.

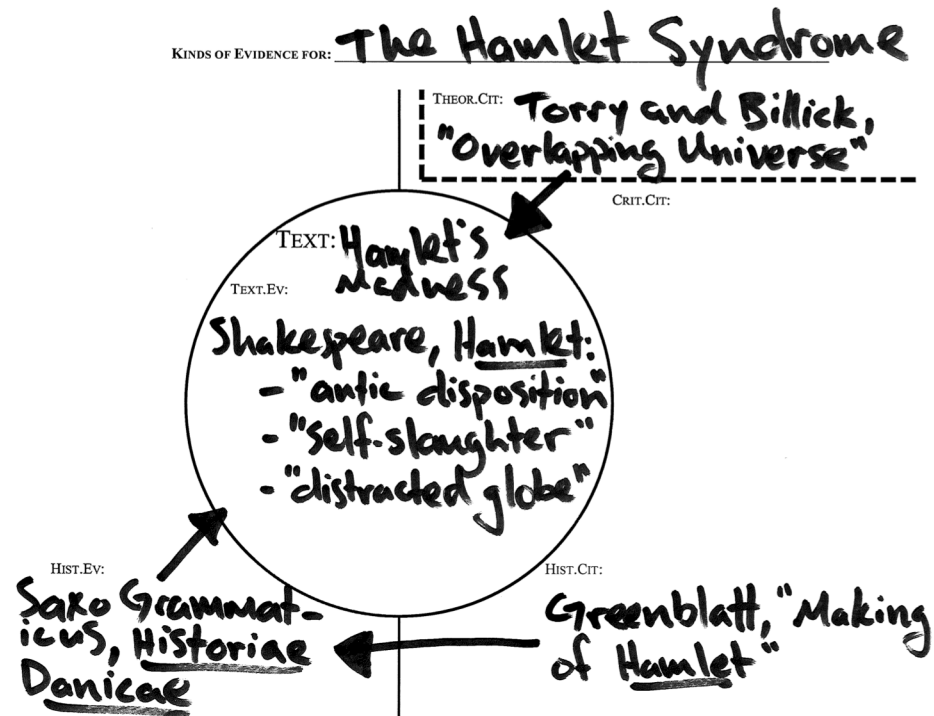
THE KINDS OF EVIDENCE IN ACTION



Citational Evidence: The writers referred to by the author of an interpretation in order to aid his or her argument. There are three kinds of citational evidence: critical, historical, and theoretical.

Historical Citation: A reference to a writer who has interpreted the historical evidence relevant to the composition of a text.

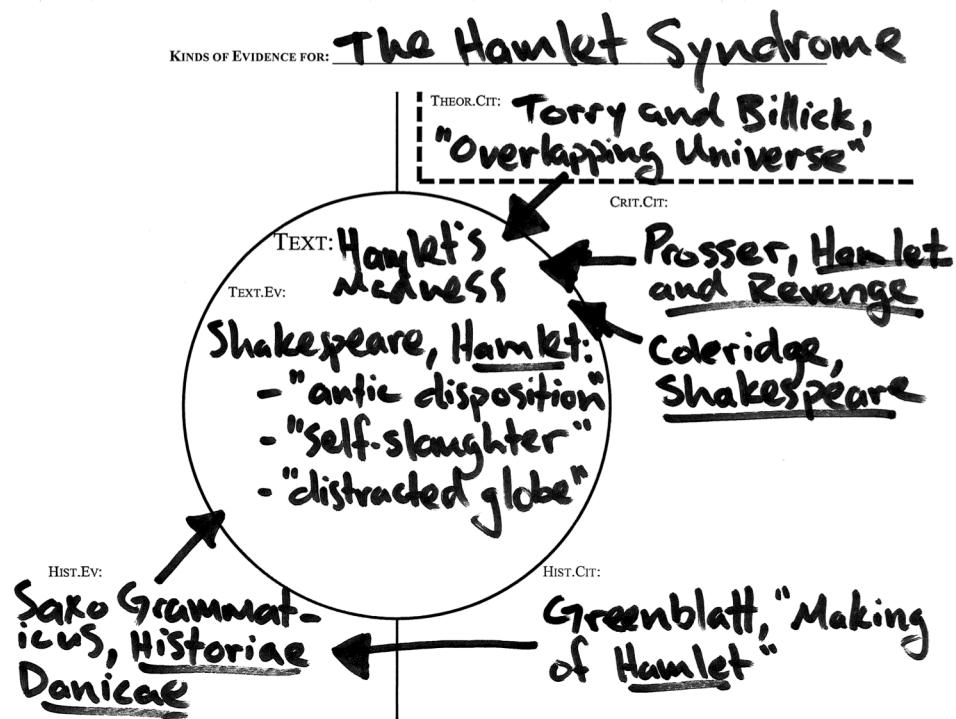
THE KINDS OF EVIDENCE IN ACTION



Citational Evidence: The writers referred to by the author of an interpretation in order to aid his or her argument. There are three kinds of citational evidence: critical, historical, and theoretical.

Theoretical Citation: A reference to a writer who deals with a problem that exists in the text, even though they don't directly discuss that particular text or its historical context.

THE KINDS OF EVIDENCE IN ACTION



Citational Evidence: The writers referred to by the author of an interpretation in order to aid his or her argument. There are three kinds of citational evidence: critical, historical, and theoretical.

Critical Citation: A reference to another writer who has interpreted the same text as the author of an article.

THE ELEMENTS OF ACADEMIC ARGUMENT IN ACTION

- *Question/Problem*: Why does Hamlet feign madness?
- *Method*: Psychological. Insanity as legal term; mental illness as psychological term.
- *Evidence*: (1) “antic disposition”; (2) “self-slaughter”; (3) “distracted globe.”
- *Analysis*: (1) no logical reason; (2) Hamlet depressed; (3) Hamlet mentally ill.
- *Argument*: Hamlet feigns madness (insanity) because he is already mad (mentally ill).
- *Structure*: Evidence, Analysis, Question, Argument, Evidence, Analysis, Implications.
- *Stakes/Implications*: The Hamlet Syndrome and the Insanity Defense.



PLAGIARISM



PLAGIARISM



PLAGIARISM: UNIT-BY- UNIT

Unit 1:A Single Source Analysis

- Meet and Greet
- Ethical Issues
- Technical Issues

Unit 2:A Multi-Source Analysis

- Working with Sources
- Quoting/Paraphrasing
- Reference Works for Context

Unit 3:A Research Paper

- Managing a Research Project
- Entering an Academic Convo
- Being Vigilant in High-Stress Times

NOT USING SOURCES (ASSIGNMENT)

Not Using Sources

Published

Edit



Objective

When doing a single-source analysis, outside sources should not be consulted (the one exception is that you may use a dictionary, such as the [Oxford English Dictionary](#) [the best dictionary out there], for matters of word definition and etymology). This exercise is designed to help you find the virtue in *not* using sources, especially internet sources such as *Sparknotes* and *Wikipedia*. It is important to understand that these sources do not give *the* interpretation of a text but *an* interpretation and sometimes a *bad* interpretation.

Readings

- *The Harvard Guide to Using Sources: "Why Use Sources?"*
- William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (ca. 1599): Act III, Scene i

Assignment

Paraphrase and analyze Hamlet's famous "To be, or not to be" speech.

Instructions

Form a group of three and download, printout, and complete [this form](#) (it's important to do this assignment the old-fashioned way, on hardcopy with pen and paper). When you're done, have each member in your group upload to Canvas a PDF of your completed form, and bring it to class for discussion (you can all upload the same file, but each member needs to have his/her own submission).

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