Drama Analysis Paper with Research Support
Due: Wednesday, May 30

Requirements:
☐ This paper must be 1000 words minimum and is 14% of your grade.
☐ This paper must use one outside source to support your argument.
☐ Your outside literary analysis source can be one (or more) of the articles provided by me or a literary analysis journal or book article (or full-length book study) on the novel that you find and acquire using one of our library databases or google scholar (NOT google). If you you’re your own article, YOU MUST get my approval before you use it, and you must turn in a copy with your final paper.
☐ All in-text citations and the plays and article(s) information should follow your paper in a "Works Cited" list and MUST follow MLA citation rules. You can consult the MLA rules links on the course policies page of our website, or a handbook such as Diana Hacker’s A Writer’s Reference or any other handbook in the Writing Center that gives instruction about MLA format.
☐ This paper represents a significant portion of your grade because in it you will demonstrate the culmination of your ENG 1A and 1B skills in research, critical thinking, argument formation and support, and essay organization.

The sources
Copies of all of the following articles are available in the library (see syllabus addendum for call numbers). Articles that might be particularly useful for the prompts are listed in parenthesis by author’s last name following the prompt. (For an extra tip, note that all articles listed below are in MLA format.) I am aware that these articles are a bit old, though the arguments are still sound. I have not had luck finding new relative short but valuable analysis.

Sam Shepard sources:
Hoeper, Jeffrey D. "Cain, Canaanites, and Philistines in Sam Shepard's True West." Modern Drama, vol. 6, 1993, pp. 76-82.

Luis Valdez sources:

The Assignment
Perhaps you have noticed that the word count on this paper is much shorter than on your last one. It’s a trick! This is not necessarily an easier assignment. I want you to pick a narrow slice of the play, perhaps one scene, or a series of related bits of dialogue and closely analyze them to support a taut, clear, narrow but very analytical and arguable thesis. Put all the critical thinking and literary analysis skills that you have learned this semester into this paper (look at arguments and inferences, figures of speech, but also look for logical fallacies or other critical thinking or rhetorical elements that it would support your thesis to explain). Further, you must go beyond class discussion; I should not read your paper and be reminded of everything we discussed in class.

Choose some aspect of Sam Shepard's True West, and/or Luis Valdez’s Zoot Suit and analyze some aspect of this piece of literature and interpret it beyond the level of plot. Should you choose to examine both plays in your paper you must pick an extremely narrow area to discuss. You will use quotations from the book to support your interpretations; indeed your interpretations should be largely based on close readings of the text itself. The secondary source should be secondary which is to say, it supports your argument; it should NOT guide your argument.
The options:

True West
1. Assert and defend a claim about masculine identity (or brotherhood) in Shepard's True West. (Hoepfer, Williams)
2. Assert and defend a claim about art in Shepard's True West. (Hoepfer, Williams)
3. Discuss the function of setting in True West and how it affects the presentation and critique of the various myths that infuse the play. Your discussion may cover large elements of setting, such as where the story takes place, as well as small details of setting such as lighting or props.

Zoot Suit
4. Assert and defend a claim about Valdez's transformation of history into art, and the effect of this transformation. Discuss how his performance works as a critique of history and media through its performative aspects and non-realist elements such as the Pachuco character. You may want to look at historical accounts of the event from major periodicals such as Time magazine or The Los Angeles Times. (Valdez, Worthen)
5. Assert and defend a claim about ethnic identity and the play's effort to assert or question the notion of ethnic identity. This prompt also invites discussion of the issue of race and poverty in the play. (Fregoso)

Both plays
6. Assert and defend a claim about the function and representation of violence in either play or compare/contrast the function & representation of violence in both plays. In your discussion of violence in Valdez's play, remember that though it is based on real events, he has edited and shaped the picture of the history that you get in the play. (Shepard: Orbison; Valdez: Fregoso, Worthen)

General Grading Rubric for Formal Paper Assignments

This rubric provides a general description of papers that fall in each of the five grade categories. You should use it to prepare your papers, and to understand your grades once papers have been returned.

A level paper (Final Grade Range: 100-90%) (Actual Paper Grades: A+ 100-98; A 97-92) This paper is outstanding; that is, it "stands out" in relation to other papers responding to the assignment. It is clear, original, and insightful and addresses the topic fully and explores the issue(s) thoughtfully. The thesis is compelling and distinctive, and the essay features clear, focused, coherent organization. The essay uses appropriate and extensive detail in a clear, interesting manner. Each part of the essay moves logically to the next part. It is nearly free from errors in mechanics, usage and sentence structure, and there is evidence of the student's intelligent and stylistic use of language. In all regards, this paper is an excellent response to the assignment and has a consistent, authoritative "voice."

B level paper (Final Grade Range: 89-80%) (Actual Paper Grades: B+ 88; B 85; B- 82) In a B paper, the writer has in some way moved beyond the basics of the assignment expectations, offering some thoughtful observations and insights. The writer will demonstrate a clear understanding of their writing task and material. Although the paper may have minor weaknesses in paragraphs, it will contain evidence of the writer's ability to organize information into coherent and unified paragraphs that display specific and detailed development. This essay will be largely free from serious errors and will be generally clear and well written and will have a clear, supported thesis.

C level paper (Final Grade Range: 79-70%) (Actual Paper Grades: C+ 78; C 75; C- 72) A paper in this category will have a discernible plan with a beginning, middle, and end and will complete at least the basic tasks of the assignment -- it is competent, adequate, and satisfactory. There may be somewhat ambiguous and imperfect reasoning and ideas may be repeated rather than developed. May fail to show a strong connection between thesis statement and examples used. Thesis may be only vaguely stated, though it is implied throughout. It may rely on unsupported generalizations or undeveloped ideas in places. But it will be organized and paragraphed well enough to allow the reader to understand the point of the discussion. It may contain errors, but not enough to continually distract the reader from the content. You must satisfactorily complete the basic requirements of the assignment to receive a C grade on your papers, and your final grade must be a 70% (no less) to receive a C in the course.

D level paper (Final Grade Range: 69-60%) (Actual Paper Grades: D 65) A paper will fall into this category if it shows serious difficulty completing or satisfying the tasks of the assignment; if it lacks an overall plan with a beginning, middle, and end; if key ideas in paragraphs lack development or illustration; or if errors in word choice, sentence structure, and mechanics seriously interfere with readability. It may fail to clearly introduce or define its central thesis. Transitions between points are awkward or non-existent. Paragraphs may be somewhat disorganized; though the total effect will not necessarily be chaotic. The writer's control of language may be uncertain and there may be many unsupported generalizations. The paper may contain one or more of the following defects: serious errors in reasoning; little or no development or support of ideas; few or no connections between ideas. Paper substitutes summary of reading for expository discussion.

F level paper and no credit grades (59-0%) An F (usually 55%-50%) would be assigned to a paper if it simply does not exhibit any of the basic requirements of composition writing; it has no clear thesis, or thesis does not respond to question asked in prompt; the organization is unclear or non-existent to the point that the logic and/or argument of the paper are unknowable. Serious and frequent errors in word choice, sentence structure, or mechanics interfere with basic readability. Papers that are well-written, but of incomplete length will also receive this grade.

A 0% F is given for any paper not turned in, turned in late, or if it is an unapproved essay on entirely other subject matter than what was assigned.