Novel Analysis Paper with Research Support: The Woman Warrior

Due: Monday, May 14

Thesis due in class for workshop: Monday, May 7

Requirements:

☐ This paper must be 1400 words and is 14% of your grade.
☐ This paper must use at least one outside source of literary analysis to support your argument.
☐ Your outside literary analysis source must be one (or more) of the articles provided by me. If you don’t like any of these sources, you may, after consulting with and receiving approval from me, use a source other than one that I provide as long as you turn in a copy of the article with the paper. It must be an article from an academic journal or book collection of academic criticism.
☐ All in-text citations and the novel and article(s) information that will follow your paper in a "Works Cited" list 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.

The sources

Copies of most of the following articles are on file in THE LIBRARY and can be checked out for use in the LIBRARY only. You may read them in the library or make your own copies. If you have trouble checking something out, see me in my office as I have an extra set that you can copy. Entries with a url can be found online in a search through google scholar. See also your syllabus addendum for call numbers.

Hunt, Linda. “‘I Could Not Figure out What Was My Village’: Gender vs. Ethnicity in Maxine Hong Kingston's The Woman Warrior.” MELUS, vol. 12, no. 3, Autumn 1985, pp. 5-12.

The Assignment

You will write a literary analysis of some aspect of Maxine Hong Kingston’s novel The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts. You will analyze some aspect of this piece of literature and interpret it beyond the level of plot. 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. You will write to illuminate and offer something interesting and insightful about the novel (not about life in general!) Keep your thesis limited in scope; remember even 1750 words is not enough space to make an argument about the novel in its entirety.

The options:

1. Assert and defend a claim about the idea of Chinese American (or Chinese America) that is being defined in the novel.
2. The narrator says “My job is my only land” (Kingston 49). In this statement she links identity with job or vocation and home. Assert and defend a claim about this link in the definition of self, vocation, and home in the novel.
3. Assert and defend a claim about the function of family (specifically mother-daughter relationships) in the creation and struggle for the narrator’s individual identity. Be careful that you do not simply tell what happens.

4. Assert and defend a claim about the role of sexuality or gender roles in the novel. You may include under this term motherhood and/or feminism.

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 95-92)

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 paragraphing, 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.