

Unit 2.

Assignment(s) 3: Responding to Literary Arguments

Final Deadline Update: Turn in your revised (or first complete) draft by Monday, February 8th to earn full credit on this assignment.

The Task(s): For this assignment, you'll have four options to choose from to use as the medium in which you respond to *The Crucible*.

- **Option 1: Narrative for the Present**

Arthur Miller wrote *The Crucible* in response to a critical sociopolitical moment in his lifetime, using fiction to comment on the political and cultural realities of his time. For this assignment, write your own narrative to comment or confront some aspect of our present-day political realities. This could be short fiction, a one act play, a comic, a narrative poem, or any other method you can think of to confront our present day reality through narrative.

In addition, you will provide a 200 word explanation of how your work comments on a specific aspect of our contemporary social, political, or cultural life, with quoted examples from your creative work.

- **Option 2: Cultural Criticism**

Much of contemporary academic literary criticism centers upon deconstructing how their authors represent or subvert the ideologies, culture, or social realities of their respective times. These academics typically use social or cultural theorists to analyze how that work through a particular lens (post-colonial, feminist, queer studies, etc.). For an example of this genre of academic writing, read the .pdf entitled "Re(dis)covering the Witches in Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*" in archie.

Do you believe that there are ways that Miller inadvertently reflects dominant ideologies or power structures of his time? Or do you believe he subverts existing inequities? In either case, for this prompt, you will be building an academic paper, incorporating outside sources of theory to build an argument about how Miller reflects/subverts his culture's dominant ideologies and norm.

- **Option 3: Value Argument**

The Crucible ends with its two principle characters, Reverend Hale and John Proctor, in dispute, having arrived at different conclusions for what constitutes moral/ethical behavior under these extraordinary circumstance. Proctor arrives at the conclusion that a person has a responsibility to a higher truth and cannot violate that principle even if it means loss of life. Hale, on the other hand, is disillusioned of any abstract moral principle in the face of the loss of life that occurred in part due to the rigors of his faith. Hale, by the end of the play, argues implicitly that the morally valid action is that which preserves human life, even if it means compromising other principles.

Who do you agree with? Choose a side and write out a value argument, using outside philosophy sources and practical examples where appropriate. You will find a wealth of material to support both arguments; feel free to adjust your thesis if you find one of your outside sources particularly persuasive to the opposing side.

- **Option 4: Sequel**

In the form of a script, right a one act sequel to *The Crucible* where the remaining main characters meet again at least five years later. What circumstances might bring them together? How might their lives have changed? What would they say to one another?

Use a mix of real history and imagination to construct a short narrative where these characters interact years after the main events of the trial. Include at least four of our major characters from *The Crucible* (feel free to invent any new one to make your plot go) and the basic Freytag's pyramid structure of a plot (ie: exposition, rising action, climax, resolution). Also, you will include a 200 word explanation for why your character choices are a natural development of the original play

The Constraints:

Option 1: 600 Word Minimum (no max) for prose, 25 line minimum for poetry. Minimum 200 word explanation of how your work comments on a specific aspect of our contemporary social, political, or cultural life, with quoted examples from your creative work.

Option 2: 600 Word Minimum (no max). Includes at least two outside source (cited in MLA format). Include at least four quotes from main text (*The Crucible*).

Option 3: 600 Word Minimum (no max). Includes at least two outside source (cited in MLA format). Include at least four quotes from main text (*The Crucible*).

Option 4: 600 Word Minimum (no max). Minimum 200 word explanation of for why your character choices are a natural development of the original play.

The Evaluation:

- Specific rubrics to developed in each option through small group work.