A good essay in this course

• is written to length. (Five to six pages are recommended for most assignments; this means about 1500-1800 words.)

• addresses a real problem or question arising from course readings and viewings, class discussion, the writer's judgment and experience, and the assignment. (Write on one of the assigned topics. If you wish to devise your own topic, talk with Stuart or Mint.)

• maintains a position or thesis reflecting its writer's own judgment — an interesting and probably complex thesis from which intelligent people could learn, perhaps by disagreeing with it. In other words, it doesn't simply "track" or summarize the text(s) or recite received wisdom.

• supports and develops that position with *plenty* of appropriately interpreted detail from the texts it discusses. (These texts can be the Shakespeare text, films, the introductory matter in the Norton, assigned criticism, or other resources.)   Detail is crucial: you must show readers the bases of your judgment as you develop them on the page.

• avoids bullshit. (Evocations of "Shakespeare's enduring universality" or coy references to "the Bard" will induce projectile vomiting in some readers.)

• is original in thought and language, i.e. is the writer's own work except for material drawn from sources, which must be fully and explicitly acknowledged. Failing to acknowledge source material is plagiarism, an infraction of the Academic Integrity Code, which you can consult at https://cuinfo.cornell.edu/aic.cfm.[1*]

• makes reference, for all material drawn from sources, in a clear and uniform way. Identify all sources in a "Works Cited" list at the end of the essay, and use MLA-style parenthetical reference throughout.

How to cite

Here's a small selection from an essay using quotations from the Norton text and from secondary sources.

> Romeo and Juliet seem to opt for death whenever possible. Exclaims Juliet,
> "I'll to my wedding bed. / And death, not Romeo, take my maidenhead" (3.2.136–
> 7). And later, Romeo asks, at the end of his life,
>
>   Ah, dear Juliet
>   Why art thou yet so fair? Shall I believe
>   That unsubstantial death is amorous
>   And that the lean abhorrèd monster keeps
>   Thee here in the dark to be his paramour? (5.3.101–5)
>
> But the "deaths" that their words personify are their own. It is not merely
> that, as Ann Slater remarks, the "Elizabethan pun on death as sexual climax ...
> comes true" in this play (Slater 145). Nor is it only that the two protagonists

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[*] [1] Fuller guidance on acknowledging the work of others and dealing with online sources is found in *The Essential Guide to Academic Integrity at Cornell* (2018). https://cpb-us-e1.wpmucdn.com/blogs.cornell.edu/dist/e/5276/files/2020/01/Academic-Integrity-Pamphlet-2019-VD.pdf

> "try to escape through darkness, subterfuge, and the language of love into a
> realm apart" (Greenblatt 1039), for that realm apart can only be death. In my
> view, the two lovers cannot distinguish their love for each other from their
> love for death, and that is because their romance, like the tradition of romance
> itself (in Denis de Rougemont's words) "only comes into existence when love is
> fatal, frowned upon, and doomed by life itself" (15, 17). If the lovers lie
> together in death, that is because they have chosen that love-death over life
> itself.

And here are sample "Works Cited" entries for the sources cited above. Use these as models.

> de Rougemont, Denis. "Love in the West." English 2080 website. Accessed February
>   26, 2080. courses.cit.cornell.edu/engl2080/208.scholia29.html
>
> Greenblatt, Stephen. "Romeo and Juliet." The Norton Shakespeare: Essential Plays
>   • The Sonnets. Ed. Stephen Greenblatt et al. Third Edition. New York: W.W.
>   Norton and Co., 2016. 1035-1041.
>
> Slater, Ann Pasternak. "Petrarchism Come True in Romeo and Juliet." Images of
>   Shakespeare. Ed Werner Habicht et al. Newark: Univ. of Delaware Press, 1988.
>   129-150. Print.

How to use quotations

A few notes:

• Quote three or fewer lines in your text, using quotation marks. Indent longer quotations without quotation marks unless they're in the original.

• When you quote verse in your text, use slashes to separate lines. (See Juliet's first lines above.)

• Use single quotation marks only within double quotation marks. For "scare quotations" (like this one), use double and not single quotation marks.

• Don't hesitate to use your words to frame or contextualize quotations so that they make sense (as with the Slater, Greenblatt, and de Rougemont examples above).

• Make your words and those of quotations fit each other. That is, respect the syntax of the original quotation and supply good syntax with your words. It would sound strange to write

> Romeo refers to "unsubstantial death is amorous," or
> According to Greenblatt, "darkness, subterfuge, and the language of love into a
> realm apart"

• Mark your own statements, if necessary, with phrases like "in my view," "I argue," "in contrast, I contend" and self-referential markers like "that is to say" and "in other words."

• Above all, *have fun* in mastering the quotation-and-reference machinery, for you'll know you're communicating with a real audience that shares your assumptions about style.