

Close Reading Literary Analysis & Presentation (20%)
Nuts and Bolts Requirements
Instructor: Paul Cook (Summer I 2017)

Here are the three basic “moves” your Presentations should make, in order of importance:

(1) first and foremost, your Presentation should *make an argument about the text*, which means you should have an effective thesis statement that is supported with both **textual** evidence (i.e., the “stuff” you get from your close reading) and some **contextual** evidence (i.e., information on the author, the time period in which the text was written or published, how the text has been received by critics and the public, etc.).

You will likely have more textual evidence than contextual evidence, and that’s okay. But you do need to have both.

*Remember the difference between an effective working thesis and an ineffective working thesis:

Ineffective, weak thesis: Stephen Crane’s “The Open Boat,” long considered a masterpiece of literary realism, tells the story of three doomed men trapped on a boat. (Notice how this is a summary statement. It tells what happens, but it doesn’t actually make an argument.)

More effective, stronger thesis: Stephen Crane’s “The Open Boat,” long considered a masterpiece of literary realism, makes a compelling statement about humankind’s solitary existence in an indifferent natural world. (This is still a bit vague, but as a working thesis it’s a good start.)

(2) Your Presentation should *provide a summary of the short story*. Remember that you’re presenting to an audience of classmates who have read the story at least once, but you will still need to provide some overview of the plot, main characters, setting, themes, etc.

(3) Your Presentation *include a brief (one-page) handout that details key information about the text and its context*. Be sure to cite any sources you use in a Work/s Cited. Remember: handouts for short, 7-10 minute presentations like this one should never be more than one page front and back. If you overload the audience with words and information on your handout, they won’t listen to you because they’ll be reading the handout. If you don’t give them enough information, they won’t be able to follow your argument. Think critically about what information to include and what to leave out.

For more information on article databases for literary criticism and scholarship, go to the Pages tab in Canvas, then click “View All Pages” and select “Online Resources.” Scroll down to the links under “Research Resources.”