

## Assignment #2: Evaluation

**Purpose:** Select a movie, television show, video game, or book and write a review of it. Write to an audience who can act upon, react, or respond to your evaluation, and write with a specific purpose in mind (i.e., should they go see this movie? Should this TV show be pulled from the air for its sexist views? Is this video game an effective and fun educational tool for junior-high students?). In order to do this, you will also select a specific publication (online or print) in which your review might appear; *The New York Times Review of Books*, *Onward State*, or *Reddit* will each have vastly different audiences with vastly different needs and expectations.

**Invention:** Keep the following in mind as you plan and draft:

- Consider why your subject merits evaluation, and why it should be evaluated now. What motive drives you to write? Is there a time-sensitive need for your review (i.e., has the series's next book just come out? Is the third season of a show about to start?), or are you just articulating an opinion that is missing or hasn't yet been considered?
- Identify the category in which you are placing your subject. For example, if you are going to evaluate *The Office*, you might categorize it as a mockumentary, as an American or British comedy, as an Emmy-award winning show, as a sitcom, or as something else entirely. *The Hunger Games* might be categorized as a young-adult series, as science fiction, as fantasy, as a dystopian novel, as a bestseller, or as a book for adults. In other words, your argument will build on a stipulative definition of the category.
- Once you know the subject and category for this paper, brainstorm a list of evaluative criteria that could be applied to your category. Then determine which criteria are most important and legitimate for your subject/purpose, keeping your specific audience in mind.  
You might consider the practicality, aesthetics, and morality associated with your subject. For instance, if you are evaluating *Prometheus*, you might categorize it as a summer blockbuster. Within that category, consider these criteria:
  - ▶ A summer blockbuster should be worth paying \$12 to see (practicality).
  - ▶ It should be visually stunning (aesthetics).
  - ▶ It should not have characters that are ethically offensive (morality).In your view, does *Prometheus* fit these criteria?
- Develop an argument that either explicitly states why your subject meets the evaluative criteria for its category or why it doesn't (For instance, you might categorize *Jack and Jill* as a comedy—but your evaluation leads you to conclude that it does not meet the criteria for a comedy. Or perhaps it meets comedic standards, but should not be considered a “good” comedy.)
- Consider your purpose and intended audience—is your evaluation of your subject informative, entertaining, and/or persuasive?
- Revisit your exigence (the opportunity for making change). What are your audience's opinions and values, and how will you address, counter, or build on them?

**Expectations:** A successful critical review will:

1. Have an introduction that explains why the subject merits evaluation;

2. Place the topic in a precise category;
3. Develop evaluative criteria by which you make your key judgments, negative and/or positive (these criteria should be agreeable to your audience, or you should make the case as to why they are valid criteria);
4. Use concrete evidence and examples that illustrate the ways in which the subject does or does not meet each evaluative criterion; and
5. Perhaps compare and contrast your subject with others in the same category in order to help the reader understand your claims.

**Length:** Do some research on the publication you've chosen to write for and see how long their reviews are; yours should be tailored accordingly. In general, a good review should be 2 full pages, no more than 3.

**Proposal due July 11**

**Rough draft due July 13**

**Final draft and additional materials due: July 16**