

Specific Essay Requirements

Stylistic

- Use correct spelling; do not trust spellchecker
- Use complete sentences
- Indent quotations that extend over 3 lines
- Employ an analytical, impersonal style
- Organize your ideas and the sections of your paper with a focused *thesis statement* that is clearly stated and UNDERLINED in your essay.
- Create a meaningful title for your essay

Technical

- + *header* includes: Name, seminar faculty, name of assignment (for instance, “Essay One: Topic #x”), date of submission
- + 1.5 line spacing
- + conventional typeface, with serifs—12 pt.
- + 3/4” - 1” margins all around
- + *staple* papers in upper left corner
- + no cover pages, no folders, etc.
- + double-sided printing (preferred), black ink on white paper
- + before turning in an essay, proofread it for grammatical and surface errors; make changes as needed by marking your own paper
- + use a standard and consistent model for citation, even for program texts; see MLA guidelines for examples of good citation practices



Here is a useful website for citations and a wide variety of writing issues: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/02/>

THE
ORGANISM
THAT
LITERATURE DEMANDS



Essay One

The four topics in this handout will NOT all be available.

Your task is to prepare, in whatever way works for you,
for writing your actual essay during the day on
Thursday of week 3, from 10:00 am — 5:00 pm.

On that Thursday morning, you'll be told
which 2 of the topics in this handout
are actually available to you to choose from.

Submit your finished paper, typed, to your seminar leader's
mailbox by 5:00 pm on Thursday.

The Four Topics

Conceptualizing the Book: Beckett-style.

Write an essay that could fit in Drucker's chapter on "Precedents, Poetics and Philosophy" (along with Flaubert, Mallarmé, Jabes). The subject of your essay is how one can understand the work of Beckett—*Molloy* in particular—as an historical precedent and conceptual framework for understanding particular aspects of artists' books.

For this essay, one would rely heavily on Molloy, Drucker, and possibly independent research on Beckett's work. One could integrate Sontag, Hayles, & Barthes as well.

B & B

Write an essay that connects the Barthes readings with Beckett's *Molloy*. Choose a small number of related concepts from the Barthes that you can explain well and connect closely to your reading of Beckett's novel and to ideas that the novel itself suggests.

For this essay, one would rely heavily on Molloy, materials from the Reader on Barthes, outside research that helps you to understand and link the two, and possibly the Culler and Eagleton introductions to theory,

From Work to Text to Book

Write an essay titled "From Work to Text to Book," thus extending and elaborating on Barthes by way of Drucker's approach to artists' books—seeking out the intersection between Barthes's concept of a text and the aesthetics and poetics of artists' books.

For this essay, you'll rely on the Barthes reading and the Drucker, with the option of extending to include Hayles, and possibly independent research to support your understanding of these works.

Erotics of Molloy

Drawing on Sontag's "Against Interpretation," write an essay that addresses the question: "What would an *erotics* of Beckett's *Molloy* be?" In other words, how might a "Sontagian" address Beckett's work, *and* how does Beckett's work already relate to or reflect Sontag's ideas about interpretation & our approach to Literature?

For this essay, you'll rely on Sontag's essay and Molloy. Correlating to Barthes and literary theory texts from the Reader could strengthen / broaden your discussion.