

Assignment Sheet for Midterm Essay

Directions: Write a paper in which you develop a close reading of “Darkness,” “The Last Man,” or a key passage from either *The Doom of the Great City* or *The Road*. You need not have a central argument or thesis; what I’m looking for is a detailed close reading and analysis of the language of the poem or passage. Of course, you may have a central point/conclusion/thesis if you’d like, but this isn’t a standard kind of English paper—it’s an exercise in your close reading skills and ability to write clearly and effectively. No outside research, historical context, autobiography, etc., is required for this midterm essay.

You may have done a close reading essay in a previous upper-level English class or one of your surveys. If not, here a few good explanations/examples of close reading. You can also come talk to me about close reading strategies and writing.

<https://writingcenter.fas.harvard.edu/pages/how-do-close-reading>

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject_specific_writing/writing_in_literature/poetry_close_reading.html

<https://writing.wisc.edu/handbook/assignments/closereading/>