

LIT 2000

Literature from the Combat Zone: The Stories of Soldiers, Veterans, and Survivors

USF College of Arts and Sciences

Department of English

Group Discussion Lead (15%)

- Due Date: Day of Selected Text
- Length: 20-25 minutes
- Deliverable needed (see second page)

Mission

The purpose of this assignment is twofold.

First, a common belief among many in the English discipline is that a deeper understanding of a text can almost always be achieved through either writing about the text or teaching it.

Second, this assignment helps stress a point I will make throughout the semester: I am not the only one with something worth saying about a text. While I will certainly have things to say about a text because of my position as your instructor and as an experienced reader, trying to understand every text we read from just my perspective will only give you a piece of the overall picture.

You and your peers will have interesting insights and points about a text worth talking about. So, this assignment is a means of giving you all a “turn at the helm” (so to speak) and to engage in collaborative discussions about a text without me as a “central voice.”

However, I don’t want you all to think of this assignment as one in which you are being asked to “teach” a text. The word “teaching” carries a lot of presumptions and baggage—PowerPoint directed lectures and long-winded spiels, for instance. Instead, this assignment will be a chance for you and your group to lead the discussion our class will have about a text (or collection of texts, depending on the day).

Preparation and Application

This discussion lead assignment will ask you to effectively engage the class in a collaborative discussion on your selected text for **20-25 minutes**. To do so, you will need to find ways to incorporate your peers into a discussion and avoid having just your group members talk for 20-25 minutes. Don't worry! We'll model what that looks like in class during the first few weeks.

Before your discussion lead, there will be some preparation to get you all into groups and selecting a text.

By next week (Week 3), you'll be split into groups of 3 and expected to sign up for a text to lead the discussion on. Your group will need to come to an agreement regarding text selection. **A list of available texts and times will be posted to Canvas in a Google Doc link.** Make sure that you select an open text and DO NOT write over the selection of another group.

On the day your group has signed up for the discussion lead, you'll need to have some sort of deliverable ready to present to the class (which will include me!). This deliverable CANNOT be a PowerPoint. However, it can be any of the following:

1. A handout that blends text with visuals and has clear areas for peer engagement (such as a list of questions to prompt discussion, some activities to engage your peers in discussing the text, etc).
2. A digital infographic (via Canva or some other creative suite)
3. An open, interactive Google Doc that (like the handout) blends text with visuals and ways of engaging your peers
4. A padlet (<https://padlet.com/>) or other interactive software link

Note that the above list is not exhaustive, and other software and documents can be used for the discussion lead if you and your group believe it can help effectively engage your peers in the discussion.

During the 15-20 minutes your group will be asked to lead, you'll make use of the presentable and your group work efforts to do the following:

1. Engage your peers in discussing these thoughts while also further drawing them into the discussion by prompting them to share
 - a. What they found interesting? Why?
 - b. What they found strange? Why?
2. Present your group's thoughts about the text (or jump in and discourse with a peer or peers if they bring up something your group noticed)
 - a. What did you all find interesting? Why?
 - b. What did you all find strange? Why?
3. Spend the last few minutes recapping the discussion
 - a. What did your group have to say about the text?
 - b. What did your peers have to say about the text?

c. What are 1-3 major takeaways we have all learned from the discussion?

Assessment

Since this assignment is heavily collaborative, it seems only fair that the assessment and feedback on the assignment is collaborative as well.

After each discussion lead, the students outside of your group will be given a slip with three areas to score (on a scale of 1-5) and provide feedback on. These three areas will include:

1. Presentation of Ideas
2. Engagement of Peers
3. Effectiveness of Recap

I'll collect these slips and use them to aid in providing a **holistic** score and set of feedback for your group. By holistic, I mean that the score and feedback will consider multiple factors (student thoughts, my thoughts, the deliverable, time management, and other factors). In short, your score will not just be on the 15-20-minute discussion lead itself; rather, it will be based on a variety of factors leading up to and including your discussion lead based on the perspectives of myself and your peers.