**Embracing Complexity Major Writing Assignment 2:**

**Placing Satrapi’s *Persepolis* in Context**

**Description:**

As a class, we have analyzed written and visual arguments (such as ads, film, etc.). One of the hybrid written/visual pieces we have examined is Marjane Satrapi’s *The Complete Persepolis*. For your second written assignment, you will identify a topic explored in Satrapi’s book or an aspect of the author’s approach that interests you. You will then collect secondary sources relating to this topic or approach. After assessing those secondary sources, you select those that will contribute to your project. You will write a research-based argument that positions Satrapi’s arguments and approaches among those of the sources you have assembled in your research. Conclude with your own responsible, informed argument regarding the central focus of your paper.

**Objectives:**

The purpose of this assignment is to build skills with research that includes assembling (i.e. “mapping”) different arguments in a variety of sources. The assignment also gives you an opportunity to develop your skills with written arguments. You will also employ the skills you have acquired throughout the semester: rhetorical analysis, mapping of arguments and approaches, and now finally responsible advocacy. Employ these skills while you analyze the book, map out the different positions of your sources, and assemble all these as evidence within your own argument.

**Dates and Deadlines**

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| **Due Dates** | **What to do?** |
| **Weeks 8-11:** | Participate in brainstorming and freewriting activities to focus your research topic during Weeks 8-11. On x/x:   * Upload your research question and/or tentative thesis statement on ICON. * Bring a copy of your research question/thesis to class on x/x for a thesis workshop |
| **Week 11:** | **Library Workshop**  Meet at the Main Library on x/x for our Library Research Day. Bring your revised research question to class, as you will be given time for database research.  **REMINDER:** Failure to come prepared to workshop day will result in an automatic deduction of one full letter grade. Failure to attend workshop day will result in an automatic deduction two full letter grades. |
| **Week 12**\* | **Annotated Bibliography** (written in your own words) due on ICON before class  Look for a minimum of 6 sources:   * One of these sources will be your **primary source** (i.e. *Persepolis*). * The following sources will work as your **secondary sources**: * You **may** choose two (but only two) sources from ICON, which we have covered in class (but you do not have to)*.* * You **must** list at least 2 peer-reviewed journal articles or scholarly books relating to the controversy you are dealing with. * You **may** include a maximum of 2 sources which are not necessarily peer-reviewed, but should be credible, in-depth (perhaps journalistic) pieces * List your sources according to MLA standards and provide a 40 - 60-word description of each source, explaining the content of the source and how it will help you to establish your argument. |
| **Week 12:** | **Workshop Day:**  **REMINDER:** Failure to come prepared to workshop day will result in an automatic deduction of one full letter grade. Failure to attend workshop day will result in an automatic deduction two full letter grades.   * Upload one copy of your draft into the appropriate ICON dropbox before class * Bring one copy of your draft to class * Bring two copies of the peer review sheet (ICON) |
| **Week 13:** | **Final Copy Due!**   * Upload your final copy into the appropriate ICON dropbox before class * Bring a hard copy of your paper to class, along with your reviewed draft and peer review sheets * Make sure you attach your WC list to your final paper |

**\*In class Writing Exercises on x/x:**

* **Abstract (Thesis Paragraph)** Describe your project (i.e., which topic you have chosen, what your central argument is, what you have learned from your sources) in 150-200 words. Watch the word count!!
* **Outline:** Imagine that you are writing a 1500-word paper about this topic. How would you structure your introduction, body, and conclusion? How would you include your secondary sources into your paper? Provide a tentative outline of your imaginary paper (in bullet form, but with complete sentences). Use the “Suggested Essay Outline” on ICON.

**Approach:**

Imagine that you are a reporter of *The Daily Iowan*. Your audience consists of fellow University of Iowa students and of faculty/staff of the University of Iowa. Your tone of voice will therefore be formal, but not “starchy.”

Creating an outline will help you organize your sources and thoughts, in order to prepare you for your final paper.

**Topic Ideas:**

With any of these suggested topic choices, make sure you find a *specific* point of comparison/analysis and a *specific* thesis statement (central argument):

* A Comparison between *Persepolis* and other Coming of Age narratives
* A Comparison between *Persepolis* and other controversies related to the Middle East (Advice: you’ll have to pick and research a specific controversy!)
* *Persepolis* as a memoir: How do other autobiographical works (especially during times of war) compare to this one? (e.g. *The Diary of Anne Frank*)
* Visual aspects/Narrative techniques of *Persepolis* as a graphic novel (color choices, style, passing of time, meta-narratives)
* Or: Generate your own topic: What theme do you find compelling about *Persepolis*? Make sure you develop a specific argument/thesis statement!

**Format Requirements:**

Papers must be 1,500-2,000 words – “Works Cited” lists will not count towards word count. Format the paper like a feature piece published in newspaper. Include a title. You may use images with captions.

**Grading Criterion:**

I am looking for papers with clarity, precision, strong support, innovative interpretations, and close attention to the “texts” (i.e. Marjane Satrapi’s book and any other sources you have consulted).

Successful papers will have the following:

* **Thesis:** This is your central argument. Remember that it is important to FOCUS your argument, so that it is manageable!
* **Evidence:** Citation of material (primary and secondary sources) to back up your claim.
* **Explication and Interpretation:** Clearly showing your audience how your evidence supports the claim.
* **Rhetorical Analysis:** As you present your argument, make sure you apply the rhetorical tools and terms you have learned judiciously, i.e. whenever necessary within the flow of your argument (rhetor, intended audience, purpose, persuasive methods like pathos, ethos, logos, or mythos, etc.).
* **Organization:** Your paper should have an introduction, body, and conclusion. The “body” of your essay should be divided into “body paragraphs” which support your major claim. Each paragraph should be coherent, and the sub-topics should be organized so that each idea builds on the previous one. Transitions make the connections between paragraphs and between sub-topics clear and understandable. Topic sentences articulate the central concern of each paragraph.
* **Conclusion:** The end of your paper will restate your major claim and minor claims that support your argument. Show how they supported your central thesis, and allow you to expand your argument toward one final new idea or concern.
* **Editing:** Papers will be carefully edited for clarity and style, as well as grammar, spelling, and punctuation. (**Advice:** read your papers aloud at least once. You might hear clumsy phrasing or grammar problems more easily than you will see them on the page).

**Additional Resources for Writing:**

* Remember that the Writing Center (110 EPB, 335-0188, [writing-center@uiowa.edu](mailto:writing-center@uiowa.edu)) can help you at any stage of your paper. This is a **free** resource to students!
* If you have questions about the assignment in general or about your paper in specific, come see me during my office hours!

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