

Jayden grant

Professor Matias

Pulp Fiction

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Self Assessment

Throughout this semester in my pulp fiction course, I learned far more than just the plots of classic stories. The class challenged me to think critically about the culture, value, and anxieties of the mid-twentieth century, especially in the way women, crime, and morality were portrayed. From writing an opinion paper about trigger warnings vs censorship to completing a research paper on Ideals and expectation of women in the 1950s, I was pushed not only to analyze texts but also to reflect on the world around me. This self assessment explains the lessons I gained, how I grew, and what this semester revealed to me as a student and a thinker.

One important lesson I learned was that pulp fiction is more than entertainment; it's a mirror of the society that produced it. The stories we read exposed how deeply gender expectations, fear, violence, and desire shaped culture of women in the 1950s. I also learned that reading critically is not just about identifying themes but understanding what those themes say about power, identity and justice. Another lesson was recognizing that uncomfortable topic

violence, sexual assault, manipulation are not just shocking plot points they teach us something about the time period and about how far society has come or if it hasn't changed at all.

A major area of growth for me was developing my ability to analyze texts instead of just summarizing them. At the beginning of the semester I could describe what happened in a story, but I struggled when explaining why it mattered. Through the opinion paper and research project, you learned how to break down a text, identify patterns, and make arguments using evidence. My writing became more focused, my claims clearer, and my ability to incorporate quotes and secondary sources improved noticeably.

An eye opening moment came while researching the treatment and expectations of women in the 1950s. Reading *Postman Always Wongs Twice* and watching the film *Outrage* made me realize how normalized it was for female characters to be controlled, doubted. Or punished for stepping outside gender roles. Seeing these patterns across different stories helped me understand how literature shaped and reflects social beliefs, and it made me look at modern media differently too. I started questioning why certain characters are portrayed the way they are and what messages are being reinforced. It taught me that reading critically is not just a classroom skill; it's a lifelong one.

The most important skill I learned this semester was how to make an argument and support it with evidence. In my trigger- warnings vs censorship paper, I had to take a clear position and defend it logically. In my research paper, I learned to bring multiple texts, compare them, and build a bigger conclusion from them. This skill connecting ideas across sources is something I know I'll use in future classes, especially any that require critical writing or analysis. Developing this skill will help me in any class that requires analytical or research writing,

because i now understand how to structure my thoughts, use sources effectively, and support my claims with confidence.

Looking back on the semester, I can see how every assignment helped me shape me as a reader and writer. The course challenges me to think critically, to question what I once accepted at face value, and to understand the deeper meaning behind stories. I leave this class with a stronger ability to analyze literature, a clever writing voice, and a better understanding of how fiction reflects the struggles, values, and contradictions of its time. Overall, this semester taught me not just about pulp fiction, but about culture, perspective, and the power of storytelling.