

“Assignment: The Review Essay” by Timothy R. Dougherty
Michael Burns, Timothy R. Dougherty, Ben Kuebrich, & Yanira Rodríguez
“Soundwriting and Resistance: Toward a Pedagogy for Liberation”

WRT 120 – Tim Dougherty

Unit 1: To Teach

Assignment 3 – *The Review Essay*

In our first two assignments, we sought to harness the power of specificity to teach two separate audiences something important about ourselves and the world. Having negotiated the constraints of two separate letter genres, we’re now going to turn these skills toward a more public and less personal genre: the critical review for a public audience.

This genre is commonplace, both in academia and in the larger public sphere, as a means to teach an audience about the merits and the limitations of a particular piece of work (whether it be an academic book or a novel or a movie or an album of music). Your challenge in this assignment is to apply the skills of specificity we’ve been practicing in writing about our own lives to the analysis and interpretation of a specific text: Kendrick Lamar’s critically-acclaimed *To Pimp a Butterfly*.

Your job in this assignment is to:

1. **write a 1200-1500 word (4-5 page double-spaced) critical review** to a
2. public/academic **audience** of your choice that will
3. **provide a thorough & careful summary** of Lamar’s moves and the album’s rhetorical context;
4. **teach them something new** about a problem in our world using selected portions of Lamar’s album as an interpretive lens;
5. **impart insight** about what the album does well while noting its potential limitations or unanswered questions as well.

First full Draft Due Date: *Upload to Google Docs for workshop on Monday, October 12, 2015*

Final Draft Due: *11:59 pm on Friday, October 23, 2015*

Successful reviews will:

1. *Provide a thorough and generous summary of Lamar’s entire statement in To Pimp a Butterfly that would intrigue someone who hasn’t heard it and be agreed to by someone who knows the album well.*
2. *Focus on a key aspect of Lamar’s album that interests you, using direct quotations and interpretations of his words/music to shed new light on a current problem in our world.*
3. *Provide a generous assessment of what the album does well while noting areas where it falls short, could have been better executed, or leaves questions unanswered.*
4. *Tailor its rhetorical strategies to the constraints of the “review” genre as examined in academic journals and 1 popular print venue of your choice, keeping your chosen audience fully in mind.*
5. *Include a reflection statement that describes the intended reading audience for your review (whether more popular, such as Grantland, or academic, such as Composition Forum), and the ways you see your rhetorical choices meeting/challenging the genre expectations for the venue. This statement of 150-350 words doesn’t count towards your 1200-1500 word count.*