

Guidelines for take home portion of the midterm exam. 1000 words +/- 100 words.  
Worth 50% of grade for the midterm exam.

**Due: Tuesday, November 8, 2022 by 930 AM on Canvas.**

- 1) Begin with a one or two sentence thesis statement/argument. This is what your paper will attempt to prove.
  - a. Make sure that it is not obvious (e.g. *Cloud Atlas* has many different characters and complicated plots),
  - b. but narrow enough so that you can fully defend your position within 1000 words (e.g. a thesis statement like “*Cloud Atlas* shows that all of western civilization is morally bankrupt” would be too broad because of the focus on all of western civilization.
  - c. Make sure that the thesis statement is a critical judgment (e.g. Despite its celebration of freedom, *Cloud Atlas* cannot escape the colonial legacy it so desperately wishes to eclipse).
- 2) Pro-tip: write your thesis statement last after you have done your analysis.
- 3) Beyond the thesis statement, DO NOT WRITE AN INTRODUCTION. Just go straight into analysis. You are still writing a coherent paper with transitions between paragraphs and a significant conclusion, but I don’t want you to spend time with initial framing.
- 4) Quote at least 3 specific passages from the novels and do detailed textual analysis of them (i.e. close readings). A good guideline here: describe how the language works, how it produces certain effects. Connect these specific observations to your broader argument.
- 5) Your essay should be *informed* by class lectures and discussions, but it should not simply reproduce them. Use in-class material as launch points for different or more nuanced analysis.

Choose ONE of the following prompts:

- 1) “*Cloud Atlas* is a book that prioritizes horizontal over vertical relationships.” Discuss this statement in relation to two of the following three novels (*Cloud Atlas*, *Ghana Must Go*, *Pale View of Hills*). How do you interpret the description, "horizontal over "vertical," in relation to your chosen texts? Do you agree with this statement, or is there a way of complicating this argument further? What issues in the novel (such as history, class struggles, racism, etc.) do you think exemplify or refute this statement?
- 2) The book and the film of *Cloud Atlas* feature a similar storyline, but have very clear differences in terms of styles, themes, and expressions. What stands out among these differences? Here are some potential key terms to help you organize your thoughts: History as Repetition, Globalism, race relations. Write an essay comparing the novel and the film around one or more of these key terms.
- 3) Choose two minor characters from the three novels we have read so far. Consider the ways in which we discussed in lectures the function of minor characters in fiction. How does the depiction of these minor characters contribute to the overall ideas of the stories from which they come? How do they fill out the worlds they represent and inhabit?
- 4) History repeats itself. According to Karl Marx, history's repetition implies a constant devolution due to an inability to learn from the previous lessons from the past. Do you agree with this statement? If so why, and if not why not? Use *Ghana Must Go* and/or *Pale View of Hills* to explore this idea (NOT *Cloud Atlas*) Consider terms such as reification, historical repetition, and farce to supplement this idea.