Essay 2: Beyoncé’s *Homecoming*
ENGL 1102 (Josh Sewell)

**Length:** 3 FULL pages minimum (double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point font, MLA format, works cited page doesn’t count toward page length)

**Due Date:** Wednesday, July 3 at the beginning of class (submit an electronic copy to the appropriate CourseDen folder before coming to class; bring stapled hard copy with you to class)

**PURPOSE:**
In this essay, you will gain experience with incorporating secondary sources by employing skepticism and recognizing your own biases/worldviews and their influence on your assessment of a source. You will use research to formulate and support an original argument on the importance of music in modern culture (specifically how its thematic elements touch upon social issues) that synthesizes source material with your contribution to the critical conversation.

**DESCRIPTION:**
Choose **ONE** of the following topics to discuss in your essay:

1. So far this semester, we have discussed the cultural power of music, specifically how it connects to larger social issues such as identity, race, class, sexuality, gender, etc. Consider how this occurs in *Homecoming* and construct a **specific** argument discussing how the film addresses one of these topics and to what purpose. Be sure to incorporate Amy Zimmerman’s article as you formulate a complex “so what?”

2. Throughout *Homecoming*, the film’s major themes are communicated through key scenes. Incorporating what you’ve learned about mise-en-scene, perform a close reading of **one** performance from the film (or a behind-the-scenes moment, if you prefer) and construct a **specific** argument discussing how it successfully serves as a thesis statement for the entire film. Be sure to incorporate Amy Zimmerman’s article as you formulate a complex “so what?”

3. WILD CARD! Don’t like these prompts? Make up your own. Just remember you must analyze *Homecoming* in some way while incorporating Amy Zimmerman’s article, craft a debatable thesis, and I must approve your topic in advance. (In other words: No pre-approval, no grade. Proceed at your own risk.)

**PROCEDURE:**

1. **Introductory Paragraph**
Your introduction should hone in on the **specific elements** of the text you’re writing about. We don’t need a summary of the entire film because we’ve seen it. Just make sure we’re on the same page. This information should be written **entirely in your own words**, followed by an in-text citation. Finally, you should bridge the intro and the body of your essay with a **thesis statement** (you may write this at the beginning and revise it as your ideas develop, or you may find that you “write yourself to it” and it emerges later; either way, it should be moved to the last sentence of the intro paragraph before the essay is completed).

2. **Supporting Argument/Body of Essay**
Next, develop 3-5 body paragraphs that develop claims responding to the text. Your supporting paragraphs will **each develop a different claim** about the text’s content, based on your engagement with it, while also connecting to the larger argument laid out in your thesis.
Each body paragraph should include…
- a clear topic sentence that can be debated
- specific supporting examples from the texts; yes, you will need to quote correctly and directly from the texts at times
- a brief explanation after each example stating how and why that example proves your topic sentence

3. Conclusion
Re-emphasize and expand upon your own argument. Reflect on why this topic is important beyond the scope of your own essay. Why should your reader care? What is at stake? In other words, leave your reader with a sense of the larger issues relevant to your topic. If your argument responding to the text is true, and if you’ve proved it well, what is the “takeaway” for someone reading it?

RESOURCES:
1. Overall Help: In addition to office hours, the University Writing Center is a great resource for all your writing assignments in any class. I cannot emphasize how important it might be for you to make appointments there.

2. Help During the Writing Process: Remember the PDFs and links in the Unit 1 folder! Just because we’ve moved on to other units doesn’t mean they’re not still important. Use them as tools to brainstorm a basic structure for your argument, but feel free to adapt (please adapt!) as needed in order to maintain logic, clarity, and correct grammar in your writing.

3. MLA Help: Be sure to use the Purdue OWL website in formatting both your in-text citations and works cited page. Remember you must cite every reference to your source, including any material summarized or paraphrased. Accidental plagiarism is still plagiarism!

Your essay should be an original response to your selected text, but be sure to cite any additional sources that you use for historical/cultural/statistical purposes in your argument. (Note: Although the Zimmerman article is the only required secondary source, for a 3-page essay, you should have no more than 1-2 additional entries on your works cited page.)

Grading rubric available on CourseDen.