A Layered and Sustained Reading of a Single Text through Social Annotation

Hypothesis is a social annotation tool that allows users to annotate webpages and documents individually, collaboratively, and creatively in a variety of contexts. This assignment will utilize Hypothesis to explore a single text over a series of passes, or read-throughs, to create an iterative and evolving conversation over a period of time. This is a special use case for Hypothesis and represents just one of the ways we will use it in this class. A layered and sustained reading of a single text can be applied to a variety of texts for a variety of purposes in any discipline; however, in this class we will use this to do one or more of the following in this unit:

- **practice** close reading and analysis
- **build and defend** an argument
- **Compare and discuss** different arguments
- **explore** rhetorical strategies

Specific Application in this Assignment

One of the requirements for this course is to explore a work of literature and write a primary source argument based on just the text itself. What better text to explore than one that is also open-ended, like John Patrick Shanley's Pulitzer-Prize-winning play, *Doubt: A Parable*? The play takes place at the height of the Civil Rights movement and centers on the question of whether or a not priest is guilty of impropriety with a 12-year-old African American student at a Catholic school and church in the Bronx. The text is not graphic, although it deals with difficult subjects and the moral dilemmas that arise in the face of danger and doubt, and there is no direct evidence provided that establishes the truth definitively: the central question is never answered. In fact, in an interview with Charlie Rose, Shanley once said, "The last character in a play is the audience... [and that] the last act of a play takes place over dinner and drinks."

This layered and sustained activity is our opportunity to untangle the complexities of the play to help you unravel what you believe to be the truth, using the evidence in the text and, later, from the filmed version of the play. There is no single correct answer, but our perspectives, interpretations, and debates will help you arrive at the truth as you see it, and this is the whole point of rhetoric—to examine evidence, think critically, and draw your own conclusions, not just about a play and what really happened there, but in every aspect of life. It will also help you build and defend your own argument for the primary source paper based on this play. This assignment aims to be one of the most practical and engaging assignments you will do all semester.

Part 1: Annotating the Text Individually

1. Before you annotate and discuss the play collaboratively, you will annotate it in the first pass, or read-through, by yourself and for yourself. This can take place in one of two ways:

    -   **As a separate Hypothesis assignment** for an individual read-through and annotation. This option can be used if I want to take a grade for your individual annotations and be able to read them all myself.
        -   There are two basic variations on this, one using the school version of Hypothesis in Blackboard or using the free Chrome extension for Hypothesis, each of which has its own benefits.
    -   **As part of one continuous Hypothesis assignment** that starts off with an individual annotation, completed in your private annotation space that is isolated from the group annotation space and only visible to you, followed by the group annotation and iterative discussion that will take place over a span of weeks. This option can also assess the individual annotation via other means but has the added benefit of keeping all annotations, public and private, in one space and keeping to one assignment. **This is the method we will use for this assignment.**

2. **Make your own personal annotations** on the text of the play and post them **Only to Me** from the drop-down post-to menu in Hypothesis, as shown below:
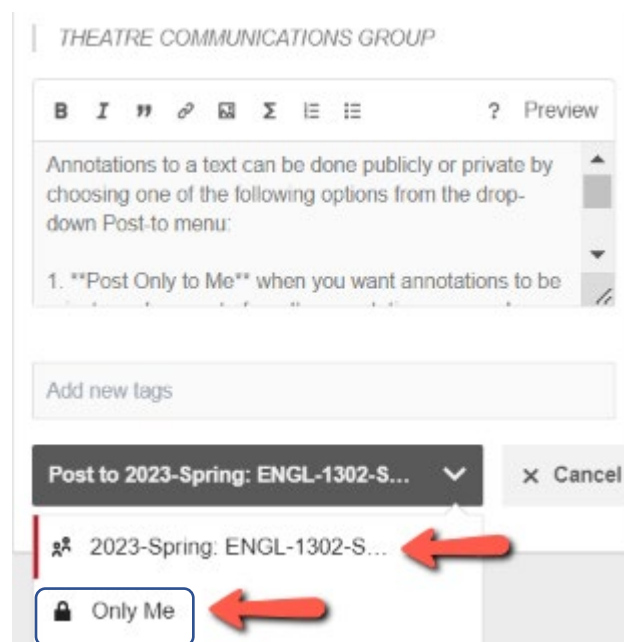
3. **Tag annotations** so you can use the filtering and sorting capabilities in Hypothesis to find what you need later. This is just a descriptor added to the "Add new tags" box before you post. In most cases, you will be given guidelines or requirements for creating tags. For this assignment, you will **tag by layer** and **annotation type.**

Part 2: Annotating the Text Collaboratively

1. After completing Part 1, the Individual Annotation of the text, you will participate in **an iterative social annotation of the play.** All posts from this point forward need to be posted to the class to be visible to others and part of the shared discussion space.

2. Each subsequent pass or read-through of the play will take place in stages, with specific focal points or objectives for each one. These passes or read-throughs will span a week and continue throughout the life cycle of the assignment and unit, and they will be collaborative and in the shared group space. The overview of each layer appears below:

Layer 1	Individual Annotation, Text Only	Develop a working thesis, process the text.	Watch film.
Layer 2	Small Group Annotation Discussion and Debate, Text and Film	Develop topic sentences, formulate arguments, make connections to film, discuss and debate the play.	Create a rough outline to establish topic sentences. Start drafting.
Layer 3	Small Group Annotation Counterarguments and Concessions	Consider more deeply how the other side will spin evidence to counter your claims and how you will defend them and how you can challenge and counter theirs.	Rough Draft Due
Layer 4	Small Group Annotation, Argument Refinement and Reflection	Reassess your initial claims, incorporate counterarguments and concessions, strengthen your evidence, and connect to the comprehensive discussion.	Peer Review Due

Note: Revised and Final Drafts will be due in the remaining weeks in this unit, but the annotations will serve as a continued resource and reference as you revise and finalize your paper.

 Instructions for each layer will be provided and reiterated the week each begins. All posts should include tags to indicate the layer and the annotation types related to assignment instructions for that week. General and Specific Guidelines for Annotations will appear in separate documents.

Grading

Hypothesis assignments default to a grade scale of 10. Points for this assignment are allocated to each layer of this extended annotation activity as follows:

Layer 1 Individual Annotation: Processing the Text and Developing a Working Thesis (0-3 points)

0 points	Annotations lack depth or are not present, showing minimal to no engagement with the text. No working thesis is present, or the thesis is not rooted in textual evidence.
1 point	Annotations are present but lack depth or are unevenly distributed or appear too infrequently throughout the text. The working thesis is present but could be more clearly linked to the text.
2 points	Annotations demonstrate some engagement with the text, and a working thesis is rooted in textual evidence; however, there is room for more thoughtful exploration or evenly distributed annotations.
3 points	Annotations are distributed evenly across the text and demonstrate thoughtful engagement and interpretation. A clear working thesis is present and rooted strongly in textual evidence.

Post: Only to Me   **Tags:** Layer 1, Annotation Types for Layer 1

Layer 2 Social Annotation: Discussion and Debate (0-3 points)

0 points	Minimal or no evidence of participation in discussion and debate. Annotations and interactions do not demonstrate thoughtful engagement with the text or contributions to the conversation.
1 point	Evidence of limited participation in discussion. Annotations and interactions show some engagement with the text and contribute to the conversation to a certain degree but could be more extensive or in-depth.
2 points	Active participation in discussion is evident. Annotations and interactions demonstrate thoughtful engagement with the text and contribute to the discussion and debate; however, there is room for more substantial contributions or interactions.
3 points	Strong evidence of active participation in discussion. Annotations and interactions demonstrate thoughtful and comprehensive engagement with the text and with peers, contributing significantly to the conversation.

Post: to the Class/Group   **Tags:** Level 2, Annotation Types for Level 2

Layers 3 and 4 Social Annotation: Counterargument and Concessions Plus Argument Refinement (0-2 points each)

0 points	Minimal or no evidence of engagement with counterarguments, concessions, or argument refinement. Annotations and interactions do not demonstrate thoughtful engagement with these elements.
1 point	Evidence of limited engagement with counterarguments, concessions, and argument refinement. Annotations and interactions demonstrate some thoughtful engagement with these elements but could be more in-depth or extensive.
2 points	Strong evidence of engagement with counterarguments, concessions, and argument refinement. Annotations and interactions demonstrate thoughtful and comprehensive engagement with these elements, contributing significantly to argument development and refinement.

Post: to the Class/Group   **Tags:** Level 3 and Level 4, respectively, plus Annotation Types

Summary	This is a two-part assignment that you will complete alone and in collaboration with your classmates. **Part 1** requires you to independently annotate the text of the play *Doubt: A Parable* by John Patrick Shanley to figure out what you think, formulate a thesis, and start gathering evidence and thinking about how you will use that to defend and support your argument in the paper you will write. **Part 2** requires you to annotate and discuss the play with a small group of classmates, focusing on specific things each week to add to the conversation. This is a layered annotation exercise that will span four weeks. The instructions on this document are comprehensive, but each week, you will have a condensed version, only focusing on the task at hand.