

MIT OpenCourseWare  
<http://ocw.mit.edu>

21L.003 Reading Fiction  
Fall 2008

For information about citing these materials or our Terms of Use, visit: <http://ocw.mit.edu/terms>.

## Reading Fiction

### Paper #4

Due: 1 Day after SES #25

Evaluation:

Due on SES #25

### Rewriting and Revision: A Distinction

Choose the paper with the lowest grade. If you have equal grades, choose the paper that you most want to reconsider.

You have plentiful writing (and reading) experience and control of basic essay structures. You understand that the author's text is your one, true authority and that in its surfaces lie the wonderful depths that can continue to expand meaning for us as readers and thinkers.

In rewriting, a writer rereads and rewrites a draft of the whole – clarifying and extending the fitness of its parts in a whole structure. In rewriting, the writer becomes aware of the relationship of parts (paragraphs) to whole (essay). For example, a good conclusion reflects the hypothesis of the beginning and the development of that by the middle.

In revision, the writer has a new vision of his/her idea and, to incorporate the vision or put it into perspective, recasts the whole. Such discovery depends on luck and readiness; luck is ungovernable, but rewriting, because it is a state of readiness intensified by slowed pace and close focus, may be the occasion of a new vision.

Revision means that the writer has discovered a deeper or more original idea, hidden but implicit in her mind and her writing. Attentive rewriting can find it and bring it out onto the page.

Rewriting involves establishing correctness of spelling, syntax, and punctuation, including paragraphing. It is a given that you will resolve any recurring issues of grammar, syntax or citation with a writing reference. Good writing is made of consequential sentences.

Of these, it is revision that can move the work most radically forward, sometimes changing it profoundly. It is also a step we cannot demonstrate exactly or require anyone to take. With that understanding, here is the assignment for your final paper in the course.

### Evaluation

Write an evaluation of the trajectory of your work in the course as both reader and writer (1-2 pages). Approach this assessment with as much candor as you can; it is not meant to be an empty exercise in self-promotion nor will it in any way affect your final grade. Here are some ways to think about the evaluation: did your approach to reading and/or writing change in any way. If so, how? If not, go ahead and write about how and why that was the case. If it remained static, why do you think that was so? Did you re-read stories or novels a second time? How did that make a difference, if it did? Are you the same or a different kind of reader/writer? Many of you had already read *Frankenstein* – what was your experience in rereading it, if you did?