Choose any movie, novel, TV show, music album, or video game, and write an essay evaluating it. Evaluation means analyzing what the strengths and weaknesses of your subject are—not just describing it—and making an assessment of its overall quality. (Evaluation is described in more detail on pages 164 and 168-69 of The Norton Field Guide to Writing.)

See the back of this handout for the list of what should be included with your finished paper on the due date for this project, October 2.

**Tips and specifications**

- One key to success on this assignment is clear and thoughtful criteria: traits that you value in a movie (or novel, etc.). Common problems with content include describing or narrating rather than analyzing, or doing some other kind of analysis.
  - If you invest some time in generating a number of ideas for points to discuss, you can then choose the ones that turn out to be most interesting or important or that do the best job of explaining your overall rating.
  - While you will need to choose from among all the possible aspects of your topic, don’t overly narrow. Discussing just one or two points can make an evaluation feel out of balance.
- In addition to discussing the specific traits that matter to you, be sure to indicate what this all adds up to—if the novel is good in some ways and poor in other ways, how do these balance out? Overall, is it terrible, kind-of-good, the best you’ve ever seen? (Etc.) That is your thesis for this type of paper.
- Evidence for your points should come mostly from the thing itself. Other kinds of information (such as statistics about its popularity) can suggest that it is good, but not show how and why.
- Choose a target audience for your evaluation. This could be a general audience (with varying degrees of knowledge of and interest in video games, for example) or a more specialized audience (hard-core gamers). Think about how your audience affects your choices of what information to include and what to leave out, your criteria, etc.
- Write formally, in a style appropriate for most academic writing (even if you are writing for a general audience). However, a formal citation for the work you are evaluating is not necessary.
- There is no specific length requirement; instead, focus on developing your evaluation as fully as you can. If it’s helpful to have a target length, think of about 800 words.
Your completed project should include all of the following, placed in a folder:

Informal writing:
- Audience analysis, outline, and thesis statement from Sept. 20 (not necessary to include if you put this in the dropbox or email)
- Paper draft from Sept. 25 (not necessary to include if you put this in the dropbox or email)

Final draft of the paper, typed and printed. See the “Format” handout for guidelines for formatting your paper.

Reflection: A new piece of informal writing (informal, typed or handwritten) in which you
- describe how you used feedback on the drafts in preparing the final paper,
- state what you are most proud of in the finished paper and what you like the least or feel least confident about, explaining why, and
- reflect on something you learned from this project (such as new strategies you tried out for generating ideas, a difficulty you ran into and how you worked through it, etc.)

Be as specific as you can in your reflection. For example, refer to a few specific comments you received on your draft and describe what exactly you did in response.

Grading

Informal assignments – max. 10 points each
Full credit if you did them on time, they show an appropriate degree of progress toward the final draft (allowing for meaningful feedback), and they are included in the final assignment folder (if not submitted electronically).

Final draft – max. 200 points
Based on the full grading rubric for papers.

Reflection – max. 15 points
How clearly, thoughtfully, accurately, or insightfully you discuss your process and learning and assess your own writing.