

Response Essay #3: *Welcome to the Desert of the Real & The Dark Knight*

Due Date: May 5th

Requirements:

- Three pages, double-spaced
- 11-12 pt. font (Times New Roman, Calibri, Garamond)
- Two sources (*Zizek & The Dark Knight*) cited correctly using MLA format
- Uploaded via Lore by 5:00pm of the due date (late papers will not be accepted)

In this response essay, I want you to use Zizek's book *Welcome to the Desert of the Real* to perform a reading of Christopher Nolan's 2008 film *The Dark Knight*. By 'performing a reading,' I simply mean that you will view *The Dark Knight* through some of Zizek's central arguments regarding terrorism, security, fantasy, politics, and the law in his text.

Note: Zizek has written elsewhere about the Nolan trilogy. I want you to use only *Welcome to the Desert of the Real* in your essay. If I find you have used other sources, I will not accept your paper and you will receive a 0%.

Your essay should generally include all of the following:

- 1) Close reading of individual scenes, motifs, and themes from the film. By 'performing a reading' of a popular culture text, you are attempting to use a theoretical lens to view that text. However, that always must be grounded in specific, detailed arguments that come from the text. Any theoretical argument that lacks adequate textual support will not qualify as a successful reading.
- 2) Thorough understanding of Zizek's central concepts from *Welcome to the Desert of the Real*. We will be reading and responding to Zizek's text over three class periods. It is imperative that you reach a full understanding of the text during this time so you are able to adequately explain Zizek's theoretical model in applying it to *The Dark Knight*. If you do not to fully understand Zizek, you will not be able to complete this essay.
- 3) Intelligent application of Zizek's central concepts to *The Dark Knight*. In any reading of a text, there is no one 'correct' interpretation. Any interpretation must be grounded in the text and fully understand the theory applied, but the argument can be guided anywhere from there. An original, thoughtful reading of the film is infinitely more important than attempting to give the professor what you think they require in terms of interpretation.

This essay will be graded based upon: 1) meeting all of the requirements of the assignment; 2) close reading of individual scenes/motifs/themes in *The Dark Knight*; 3) thorough understanding of Zizek's central concepts from *Welcome to the Desert of the Real*; 4) intelligent application of Zizek's theory to *The Dark Knight*