

**Analytical Target Practice 1**  
**Due Tuesday, Sept 14**

**ABOUT THE ANALYTICAL TARGET PRACTICE EXERCISES**

The series of six Analytical Target Practice assignments have a variety of goals:

- 1) To give you an excuse to attend especially closely to certain key texts from this course
- 2) To keep you critically engaged with the big ideas of the course
- 3) To exercise your writing muscles (which is one of the overarching goals of the AHS Foundation)
- 4) To alert me to any issues in comprehension of certain key texts (both for you as an individual and for the class as a whole)
- 5) To alert me to any issues in mastering certain foundational writing skills (both for you as an individual and for the class as a whole)

They have been designed in coordination with Gillian Epstein, Olin's Writing Consultant, and in response to some data the AHS Committee collected last year about the relative strengths and weaknesses in writing across the AHS Foundation classes.

These exercises are designed to help you hone your writing skills. As such, you will get out of them what you put into them. You will complete six *brief* writing exercises (a couple of paragraphs, maximum) over the course of the semester, asking you to analyze excerpts from our readings, identify key quotes, etc. I will not be providing in-depth feedback on these exercises the way I will on your more substantial writing assignments. Each will be graded with a check-plus/check/check-minus system and the set of six will be worth 10% of your final grade. A check will be given when your writing demonstrates sufficient competence with the particular skill being assessed; check will be the modal score, by far. A check-plus will only be given when your writing demonstrates outstanding performance on the given skill. A check-minus will be given when your writing demonstrates that you could benefit from additional practice with a given skill. If you receive a check-minus on a given exercise, I will strongly recommend that you meet with our writing tutor to improve your skill in this area. Doing so will certainly help your overall grade by building up your writing abilities.

Please regard these exercises as opportunities, rather than as burdens. They were designed to address some of the major challenges Olin first-year students tend to have with writing and to help you improve. Whatever your current writing ability, everyone can always benefit from additional writing practice.

## Analytical Target Practice 1

Please read the following excerpt from McAdams (1995):

“Trait descriptions are essential both for social rituals like the post-party postmortem and for adequate personological inquiry. A person cannot be known without knowing traits. But knowing traits is not enough. Persons should be described on at least *three separate* and, at best, *loosely related levels* of functioning. The three may be viewed as levels of comprehending individuality amidst otherness – how the person is similar to and different from some (but not all) other persons. Each level offers categories and frameworks for organizing *individual differences* among persons.” (p. 371, italics included in original)

Please write 1-2 paragraphs that make a strong analytical point about the excerpt. A “strong analytical point” does not simply re-state the content of the excerpt or declare it “good/bad, agree/disagree.” Instead, a strong analytical point is one that deeply evaluates the excerpt; it explains something new or not obvious about the writer’s point, extends upon the writer’s contribution, and/or deconstructs the specific language choices the writer made in an effort to reveal some creative meaning from the excerpt. Please note that your written output does not need to be long, but it does need to be deep (evidences critical thinking). Your response should have a clearly identifiable thesis statement and specifically cite elements of the excerpt as evidence in support of that thesis. You may bring in other excerpts from the original text, but you do not need to.