ENGL 2026
MCU Presentation Instructions
Due: Varies (see Daily Schedule)
Worth: 20% of final mark

Groups of 4 – 5 students will produce and deliver 15 – 20 minute presentations on some aspect of the Marvel Cinematic Universe. Unlike the presentations on Star Wars, which asked groups to focus on specific segments of that universe, this presentation is much more open. Groups will focus on a topic/issue/something that runs through 4 – 6 individual texts within the MCU and discuss how it develops, how it is shaped by the production history of the MCU, how it relates to the past and/or future of the MCU, how it relates to source material (the comics, for example), and/or similar questions.

Some aspects of the MCU you may consider looking at:
- The development of specific plotlines that emerge slowly over the course of several films in an obvious or less than obvious manner and how those plotlines change over time to include new information or developments within the MCU or within its production history. For example, Thanos first appears in the mid-credit scene to *Avengers*, where he is played by Damion Poitier and is introduced with a line that follows from the *Infinity* arc in Marvel Comics. Ultimately, the role was recast and his motivation revised. Another example: James Gunn's temporary banishment from Marvel after some old tweets surfaced that cast him in a bad light resulted in his working on DC's *The Suicide Squad*, work that delayed *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. III*.
- The introduction, integration, and development of specific characters. The Hulk, for example, has a somewhat strange history in the MCU, as does Black Widow. The former was introduced by a film that seemed largely disavowed by Marvel Studios until scenes from it were incorporated into *What If...?* and played by by two different actors. Black Widow was introduced in *Iron Man II* and never had a movie or show of her own until after she was dead within the MCU. It seems now that she will likely not come back because of contract issues between Scarlett Johansson and Marvel Studios.
- The scale of conflict across the MCU. The first film, *Iron Man*, sees the titular character face off against a fairly pedestrian and Earth-bound foe. *Captain America: The First Avenger* introduces an early 2oth-century conflict with a touch of the supernatural (the Tesseract), although the latter only becomes so in retrospect. *Thor* introduces the larger cosmos, but that space only becomes important to the MCU generally much later. Phase Four is in the process of introducing the multiverse and even a larger scale conflict than we have seen before.
- Other interesting throughlines include: the place and role of family in the MCU, the place and role of nation and Earth-bound politics in a cosmic setting, th role of technology and magic in the MCU and the distinction between them (and the MCU's refusal to really address magic per se before *WandaVision*), the focus (in nearly every film) on abstract spaces (e.g. the Dark Dimension, hyperspace jumps, wherever it is that Thanos sits while holding court, the Quantum Realm, and so on), the focus on Marvel Comics B-team (the Avengers) because of intellectual property rights issues pertaining to the X-Men and Spiderman, and so on.

Beyond this difference in focus, your presentation should make use of the sorts of ideas that you made use of in the previous presentation. For example, you may choose to make use of one of the following lenses: Critical/scholarly, Franchise, Storyworld, Nostalgia and Fandom, Genre, or Form. You may also wish to consider:
- making use of any number of concepts related to the study of franchises: world consistency, backstory, world coherence, world completeness, transmediality, building, and so on;

- doing research on the texts in question both in scholarly and popular venues;
- and/or looking at other texts related to the ones you are assigned (comics, video games, fan fictions, novels, and so on).

As with the Star Wars presentation, your presentation may go in any number of directions, but it should have a point that it is trying to consistently convey. It should not be a series of points or trivia about these texts. It should have a critical and pedagogical purpose. As stated above, at the conclusion of the presentation, the class will take a few minutes to consider questions and responses to the presentation.

Groups are strongly encouraged to meet with me to discuss the presentation and possible approaches to it. These meetings can take place face-to-face once we move back to in person instruction or on Zoom.

The technicalities
- Your presentation will take place on the day listed on the Daily Schedule. It cannot be rescheduled nor can it be made up.
- Each member of the group will receive the same grade. If you are having a problem with a group member, let me know as soon as possible.
- Presentations must include a visual component. This can be a Powerpoint/Prezi presentation, a video, a handout, or something else.
- Presenters can ask the class to do additional viewing or reading in preparation for the presentation. These requests must be SPECIFIC and must be made a week in advance of the presentation. They should also be reasonable. That is, you should not ask us to watch three more films or something like that.
- Groups should make an effort to familiarize themselves with their subject beyond what we are watching together in class.
- Group members are free to divide up the work in any way they see fit. That means each member might be responsible for watching certain films or episodes of a show. Some members might do the actual presenting while others don't. And so on.

The grade
- As stated, each member of the group will receive the same grade.
- Grades will be holistic, which means I will determine it based on the overall success of the presentation.
  - Did it make a clear, interesting, useful point about the material?
  - Did it connect with our ongoing conversations?
  - Did it inspire questions and comments from the rest of the class?
  - Was the visual aspect interesting, useful, and additive? That is, was it more than just images? Did it actually add to the point or our understanding of that point?
  - Did it address the topic in a larger context such as the larger storyworld or franchise?
  - Did you present at an appropriate pace? Were you able to answer questions and criticisms effectively?
- Presentations that accomplish all or most of what the above above questions ask will receive grades in the 'A' or 'B' range.
- Presentations that accomplish half or less of what the above above questions ask will receive grades in the 'C' or 'D' range.
- Presentations that make no clear argument, are obviously disorganized, have little or no pedagogical value or relation to the course goals and subjects, or fail to materialize altogether will receive an 'F.'