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Hillsdale College English Professors Co-Author 'The Elements of Analysis'

The book, written by J. A. Jackson and Dutton Kearney, explains the fundamentals of literary analysis.

HILLSDALE, Mich. — Two Hillsdale College English professors recently co-authored "The Elements of Analysis," available from Hillsdale College Press. The book, written by Professor of English J. A. Jackson and Associate Professor of English Dutton Kearney, is a concise guide to the fundamentals of literary analysis.

"With over 50 years of combined experience in writing instruction, we wanted to write a simple and direct book that distilled our approach to college essays," Jackson said. "We quickly discerned that our method was scalable to any student level and so decided to write a book aimed at both college professors and middle and high school teachers alike."

The book is designed to be easy for teachers to integrate at a middle school, high school, or college level while also being easy for students to understand.

"This is a book for anyone attempting to answer these two questions: What is literary analysis, and how do I do it?" Kearney said. "Students from middle school to college should read this; the book — like literature itself — scales up according to a students' reading level. Teachers will also benefit from using this book as a resource in their writing instruction."

The book assumes good essay form has already been established and frees the teacher to focus on content and insight. Among other things, the book shows students how to write an entire essay on just three words. It also includes an appendix of students' most common mistakes and how to correct them.

“We want students to stop being intimidated by English classes,” Kearney said. “Anyone can do literary analysis, and this book shows students how to read literature so that they can dig into the details that lead them to an insight.”

Jackson joined the Hillsdale College K-12 Classical Education Podcast to discuss the book, how to teach students the art of close analysis, and what texts are most useful in doing so.

To order the book, click here. For headshots of Jackson and Kearney, click here. For photos of Hillsdale College, click here. For a high-resolution copy of the Hillsdale College clocktower logo, click here.

About Hillsdale College
Hillsdale College is an independent, nonsectarian, Christian liberal arts college located in southern Michigan. Founded in 1844, the College has built a national reputation through its classical liberal arts core curriculum and its principled refusal to accept federal or state taxpayer subsidies, even indirectly in the form of student grants or loans. It also conducts an outreach effort promoting civil and religious liberty, including a free monthly speech digest, Imprimis, with a circulation of more than 7.5 million. For more information, visit hillsdale.edu.

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