

FINAL PROJECT

Since we have discussed (and will continue to discuss) various literary forms, you have wide latitude for your final project. The project will be delivered in three phases: The proposal will deliver your initial thoughts on the topic and argument; the final draft represents a full, complete argument that uses evidence effectively and discusses both the content and structural details from primary texts; and the class presentation allows you to share your project with your classmates. (I'm available to read drafts prior to the due date.)

You may choose one of the following types of projects to work on. In your Proposal, you must identify your project type and then stick to it (no changing at the 11th hour).

- A. **Traditional Essay:** With this option, the project must use more than one primary source. (2000 words)
- B. **Creative Writing:** With this option, you may write a creative piece, but you will also have to provide a Rationale (1200 words) explaining and analyzing Romantic, Victorian or 20th Century literary traditions. (See me about this option.)
- C. **Web Project:** With this option, create a Website that's innovative; do not simply write an essay and slap it into HTML. To successfully use the medium, create an innovative site that expresses the traditions that we've been discussing. (I don't recommend picking this one if you don't already have HTML experience.) At the end, write a 1200-word Rationale not only about the literary traditions' influence, but also the design decisions. (See me about writing guidelines for the Rationale.)
- D. **Film Project:** With this option, you may create a film that reflects our discussions on any of the periods or literary forms. Pick this option only if you have experience with the medium already. A 1200-word Rationale is due on the final day. (See me about this option.)
- E. **Open:** What do you have? Come discuss it with me.

PHASES

Phase I: Proposal (Due 10/30 – 300-500 words)

A proposal is the presentation of an idea that you wish to pursue. A good proposal presumes that you have already thought about your project and have devoted some time and effort in gathering information, reading, and then organizing your thoughts. A research proposal is NOT a project to be thrown together in one night with ideas off the top of your head. Thus, one might say that the proposal is a second step, following the selection of a broad topic.

The actual proposal will indicate what analytical question you wish to address. The foundation of a good essay is a good research question. Just as a tree needs a good root system to grow to be strong, a good essay needs a good analytical question. What does "analytical" mean? An analytical question can take different forms and no one form is necessarily better than others. What all analytical questions have in common is the fact that they are not merely descriptive. That is, an analytical question moves beyond the "what" and explores the "how," and the "why." A good analytical essay will use "the what" as part of the answer to "the why." But it is obligatory to address a question beyond the "what." For example, a descriptive paper would ask: "What was Gorbachev's economic perestroika policies?" An analytical paper would ask: "Why did Gorbachev's economic perestroika policies fail?" As part of the paper, you would then review what the policies were, but then you would go beyond that description.

Attach the proposal to an email (either as a Word or WordPerfect document). I will then comment on it and return it to you. No grade will be issued for the proposal; however, if you do not turn in a proposal *on time*, for each day that it is late, you will lose a grade step on the final essay grade.

Phase II: Final Draft (Due 12/7 – word-length dependent upon project)

All Phase II components will be submitted on paper and in person at the beginning of our last day of class without exception. Include a Works Cited with your essay.

Phase III: Present to the Class (Due 12/7 – 5-10 minutes)

On the final day of class, each person will use 5-10 minutes to present his/her topic to the class. Failure to present will result in a failing grade on the entire project.

TOPIC CHOICES

We've covered many topics over the course of the semester, and many of you have expressed interest in unique topics. Look back at your 3 questions submissions; you might also consider addressing the changes from one period to another; some have expressed interest in the historical facts. Remember that you must come up with some sort of comparative argument that can be explored in your project. To simply pick "femininity" is not enough. What is it about this topic that you'd like to explore? What texts will you use? (Avoid relying solely on lectures and class discussion to provide your insight into the texts.) For this topic, you must use at least two primary texts. No secondary criticism is necessary and I discourage you from looking at other scholars' assessments of the literature; it may taint you of your own opinion. If you would like to do some research, think about performing research on primary materials.

DOING TRADITIONAL RESEARCH

There are many scholars who have much to say about the literature that we've been reading this semester. However, I'm not interested in what they have to say – I can read those. For your research, begin with the primary literature that you'd like to investigate. From here, you may decide that you need more background information. This comes in the form of primary and secondary sources: 1) primary sources are the actual publications that are contemporary to your novel's initial publication; this could include newspaper reviews, advertisements, paintings or author's letters/journals (e.g., see the interesting websites on the Online Schedule); 2) secondary sources are articles or books that provide a context to the period; for instance, research on women's legal status in the nineteenth century might be useful if you're investigating the role of the Angel in the House.

To find primary resources, check the Online Resources available at my website. There are many newspapers that have been digitized as searchable text as well as author's letters. Or, read through some of our authors' contemporaries for a different view of the period. You could even use the historical information in our anthologies and editions of novels. The Web offers many, many resources but be careful of those non-scholarly Websites. Any encyclopedia or dictionary (unless it's the Oxford English Dictionary) are not good scholarly sources since they just report the facts.

Anyone who has chosen to do something other than a traditional essay, must also do some research to make sure that the creative rendition is purposeful in its execution. (Choosing the other types of projects do not get you out of writing, researching or thinking about the themes of this course.)

FORMAT

All assignments need to be typed in 12pt font, double-spaced with one inch margins. Use the MLA style for in-text citations (parenthetical citation) and the MLA format for your Works Cited. Other requirements are listed below:

- Your name, the date, the course and section number should be typed at the top left-hand corner.
- Your name and the page number should be typed in the upper right corner of every page following the first page.
- Staple the pages together. (Do not fold or paperclip your pages.)
- Proofread everything before you turn it in. There should be no spelling or typographical errors.

Writing About Literature

For help with constructing your essay, narrowing your topic or doing research, see the following sites:

Writing About Literature: <http://www.wwnorton.com/litweb/writing/welcome.asp>

Writing a Literature Paper: <http://www.umd.umich.edu/casl/hum/eng/jonsmith/writing.html>