

## Final paper

### *Due dates*

- **Week 13 (11/25 to 11/27):** select your topic (or simply prepare initial ideas) for a one-on-one conference with me
- **12/10:** First draft (2 full pages minimum) due in class, in hard copy form
- **12/17:** Final draft due in the D2L dropbox by 11:59pm (no hard copy needed)

### *Assignment description*

For the final paper, write a thesis-driven analysis, using at least one text from the syllabus as your primary source. Similar to hobbyists who disassemble car motors in order to understand how they work, textual analyses raise issues and questions that open up or complicate a text in order to understand its effects, implications, contexts, and purposes. Textual analysis stems from looking closely at small parts—not from looking broadly at large parts. Thus, in this essay, it is crucial that you develop a strong thesis and carefully select evidence from the text for close reading and analysis in support of your thesis. If you are struggling with analysis or new to this sort of assignment, some of the “Resources for literary analysis” (in D2L’s “Content” section) might help.

### *Expectations*

- **Length:** 4-5 pages in MLA format, **NOT INCLUDING** the works cited page.
- **Paper format and citations:** MLA format (12-point font, 1-inch margins, double-spaced). Include a works cited page at the end. For more help with MLA citations/format, check out the MLA section of the Purdue OWL website.
- **Outside sources:** The amount of outside research you need to do really depends on the topic you choose. This assignment does not explicitly require the use of sources other than the text(s) from class that you are analyzing.
- **Audience:** While you write for members of our class in your weekly responses, imagine a broader audience for the final paper. Consider who might care about your paper and what they know (or don’t know) as they begin reading.
- **Thesis statement:** Your essay needs a thesis statement, or a clear articulation of your “take” or position on the topic. In contrast to the main point or main idea in your weekly responses, a thesis statement implies an audience and a purpose. Rather than set out to “prove” your thesis, seek to develop it and evolve it as you move through examples.
- **Submission:** Please submit your paper to the designated dropbox on D2L. The file type should be .doc or .docx. **Include your last name in the filename.**
- **Grading:** I will use the grading scale on page 5 of the syllabus—combined with the GER rubric—to score your essay.

### *Approaches*

- Develop one of your best or most productive weekly responses into a longer analysis.
- Take a limited element of the text (a section, chapter, character, dialogue exchange, poem, theme, metaphor, string of imagery, set of passages, plot structure, etc.) as a lens through which you analyze and seek to understand the text as a whole.
- Do a comparative analysis of two texts we read in class—or compare one text we read and another we did not read for class.

- Connect a course text to a current event or contemporary phenomenon. Do not use the text as a mere springboard or platform for discussing “the issue.” Rather, put the two in conversation with each other and give the course text equal time at the microphone.
- Analyze the text to see how it illuminates/complicates/questions issues of sexuality, gender, race, class, ethnicity, religious belief, or other identity markers.
- Through analysis of and research into historical context, investigate the politics or history behind a text.
- Develop your analysis based on research about the author’s life and influences.
- Address the psychology (inner thought processes, motivations, delusions) of the characters.

*Alternatives to the traditional paper*

Complete a creative project related to the class content. It can include visual elements, but its primary mode of expression should be verbal and it should demonstrate close familiarity with course text(s). **All creative projects must be accompanied by a 2-page (minimum) statement of your goals, your approach, and (citing specific examples) how the creative work relates to issues from class.** Talk to me before embarking on any of these alternative directions. I will consider other ideas not listed here, so please bring them up as soon as possible if you want to go this route.

Meeting with me is better than email. Some ideas:

- A Prezi or Google Presentation (similar to PowerPoint) that combines visual and alphabetic modes to explore an issue raised in the reading
- A series of blog posts or a Facebook page written in the voice/perspective of a fictional character, maybe with comments from other characters from the same or a different text
- A lesson plan complete with notes, handouts, visual aids, etc. (i.e. teach something we studied in class to a particular group of students)
- A video trailer advertising the movie version of one of the texts we read in class (I can help you with iMovie editing software)
- An NPR-style audio essay (I can help you with Audacity editing software)