

Research Paper Assignment

This final paper will bring together several of the skills that we've been practicing in the course so far: close-reading, analysis, critical interpretation, and research. You'll be expected to choose a single text (or a couple of texts if they're short stories or poems) to focus your reading around, but your argument may deal with larger cultural issues. For example, an analysis of Faulkner's "A Rose For Emily" might look at how the story reflects early 20th century southern attitudes towards women and marriage. Your research, then, might include articles on the story itself, on Faulkner's attitudes towards women, and/or the nineteenth and early twentieth-century contexts of those ideas and beliefs.

You need to offer an *original* argument based upon your own reading and interpretation. Outside sources should only be used to help illustrate, contrast, or complicate your own claims. You should always seek to distinguish your own contributions from those of your sources—identify the limits of their claims, and then insert your own where they belong. For example: "While Author A claims that *Moby Dick* offers an allegory on the universal quest for meaning, and Author B counters that it is really a deconstruction of the very possibility of 'meaning,' my own reading suggests that..."

You will be graded on the strength and originality of your argument, the quality of your close-reading/analysis, the depth of your research, the proper integration and citation of sources, and of course, the quality of your writing (grammar, punctuation, and style count!). Again, your scholarly sources should serve as a model for the *kind* of paper that I'm looking for (though, of course, I don't expect the same level of expertise).

The paper should be 8 typed pages (not including cover sheet and works cited), 1.5 or double spaced, 12 pt. font, and numbered. It should include a relevant title page and a works cited list. Note: a "works cited" list is different from the annotated bibliography—it includes only those sources *actually cited* in the paper, and does not include annotations.

I recommend that you start early on the research, reading, and drafting for this paper. Take the time to get feedback from me, a classmate, and/or the folks at the Writing Center. **DO NOT** wait until the last week of the quarter to start working on it!