

Spring 2010 // WSU T-C // English 372

Final Paper Assignment Sheet

Due Date (s):

- **Friday, April 16th, 5pm:** blog post #12: short proposal
- **Friday, April 23rd, 5pm:** blog post #13, longer proposal and tentative works cited
- **Thursday, April 29th:** 2-3 minute presentation in class
- **Thursday, May 6th, 9pm:** Final papers sent as an attachment to jcmeloni@gmail.com or julie_meloni@wsu.edu
 - NOTE: Unlike previous assignments, there is no leeway in the final project due date.

Introduction:

The goal of any final paper is to demonstrate mastery of the subject you've been studying all semester. Given the work you've completed on your blogs and in class, I have a very good idea of each of your levels of engagement with the material and your grasp on the fundamental themes throughout the class. Through this assignment, you have the opportunity to demonstrate your mastery in a traditional piece of literary analysis.

Without a doubt, there are a ton of different topics you can explore, because we have covered a ton of different things during our journey through the nineteenth century and both sides of the Atlantic. Whatever you choose to explore and subsequently argue for must adhere to these three general rules:

- You must link at least two movements or genres (ex: the Gothic and Romanticism, Romanticism and Transcendentalism, Transcendentalism and the "new American literature," scientific travel literature and Regionalism, etc. etc.). You're not limited to two, but two is plenty.
- You must focus on at least four different texts; "focus" can mean extended close reading or a brief paragraph of support. You're not limited to four, but four is really all you can focus on in a paper of this length. You're free to casually reference other works, of course.
- Your paper should be 2400 to 3000 words, excluding the works cited.
- Your paper should be in proper MLA format for both the paper itself (margins, fonts, identification), in-text citations, and the works cited.

The **specific rule of most importance** is that you **must make an original argument** with your work. You must have a thesis that includes with it the "so what" or "who cares" aspect of your argument, and that "so what" or "who cares" part of the analysis must be clear throughout your essay. If there is no argument, your essay is a report and not an analysis, and you will not get a good grade. This is why there are several steps to the project designed to ensure you are making an argument and not simply reporting on a topic.

Instructions:

There are several parts to the final paper assignment, and each will form some part of your final paper grade. In other words, don't skip them. Not only are they important in that they allow for feedback from me, but they do (like everything in this class) count for points. Following are some general steps for everyone, regardless of project type:

- **Step 1:** figure out what you want to do, and begin research.
- **Step 2:** blog post #12, the short proposal
 - write a paragraph or two that describes exactly what you plan to do, what you plan to argue, and how (in general) you plan to support your argument. Also, indicate *why* you want to pursue this topic.

Instructions (continued)

- **Step 3:** blog post #13, the longer proposal and tentative works cited
 - after receiving feedback from me and doing more research, produce a longer and more specific proposal
 - you will also produce a tentative works cited list, with annotations
 - find at least five **scholarly sources** that might aid you in your research and/or support your argument. If you do not know if your source is scholarly or not, ask me.
 - annotate your sources. An annotated bibliography entry follows this format:

[correct MLA citation for your source]

[sentences of summary, assessment, and reflection regarding the source and its place in your work]

for example:

Greenblatt, Stephen. *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1984.

Greenblatt's central thesis, which focuses on the development of the individual in Renaissance Europe, is particularly useful support for my argument regarding the prioritization of identity in that period. Greenblatt's chapter on Thomas More was especially helpful in my discussion of *Utopia* and its reception in sixteenth-century England.

- **Step 4:** Work on your project! Ask questions of me along the way. I am also available to look at drafts, provided they come early in the process and not a few days before the project is due.
- **Step 5:** Figure out how you are going to talk to the class about your project during the 2-3 minute presentation on April 29th.
 - Given that these are 2-3 minute presentations, there will be no multimedia or other props—your presentation will consist of you, standing in the front of the room, simply talking about what you are doing, what you are arguing, and how you are supporting that argument.
 - Expect to be asked a question either by the audience or myself, and be prepared to answer it.
 - Note that your project will likely not be finished at this point, and that is fine. The presentation is assumed to discuss a work in progress.
- **Step 6:** Turn in the final project to me via e-mail by 9pm on May 6th (Thursday of Finals Week).