

## ENG 201 "Introduction to Literature" Final Essay

*Due by 12:00pm on Monday, May 2nd – Email to [stacey.kikendall@park.edu](mailto:stacey.kikendall@park.edu)  
250 points or 25% of your grade (200=Essay, 25=Topic Proposal, 25=Peer Review)*

For your core assessment, you will be writing a 6-8 page critical essay. You are free to come up with your own topic for the paper, with the caveat that you must use at least two readings by different authors. Your primary texts need to be ones that we've read for this class. You will also need to consciously choose a critical approach/theoretical perspective through which you will analyze the readings. You do not need to announce your approach in your essay; it should be obvious to me what you are using. Instead, you will tell me of your approach in your topic proposal.

You will need to have a clear argument/thesis with plenty of supporting examples from the text(s). An essay that goes into more detail and depth will be much stronger than one that tries to cover too much ground. Your thesis should be clear, specific, relevant, debatable, and original. Everything in your essay should relate back to this central argument/thesis. Remember that an argument refers to a writer's attempt to establish the validity of a given position. As we've discussed, literary scholars are adding something new to an ongoing conversation. What is the current conversation regarding your topic and how are you going to add or change the conversation?

Because you will be spending a significant amount of time writing this essay, you should choose something that interests you. You are welcome to use one of your response papers or blogs as a starting point for your essay. Some other possible ideas to consider:

- Reoccurring themes or ideas
- A juxtaposition that provides a rich complexity
- How cultural contexts (biographical/historical/postcolonial) bear on your understanding of a text
- Point of view / Perspective
- Symbols
- Characters/People
- Setting
- Form/Genre – poetry, short stories, novels, plays
- Imagery
- Setting

Besides your primary texts, you should have *at least 3* secondary sources to support your argument. Just be sure they are credible, which you can guarantee by getting them through the library databases or asking me. You can use articles that have a point you want to explore further (whether you agree or disagree with it), articles that provide historical or biographical context to the primary text or author, or articles that are more theory based where you use a similar approach. You will need in-text citations as well as a Works Cited page, listing the sources you use (whether it is specific quotes or even ideas).

You will have multiple opportunities to get feedback on this essay, from the idea stage (topic proposal), to the rough draft (peer review and optional conferences), but you are welcome to come see me at any stage of your process. These essays are worth 25% of your grade, so you will want to do well on them.

To: EN201 Students  
From: Dr. Kikendall  
Subject: Topic Proposal Memo  
Date: Tuesday, April 12<sup>th</sup>

For Tuesday, April 12<sup>th</sup>, you will type up a proposal (in the form of a memo) detailing:

- The primary text(s) you will be analyzing
- Tentative thesis statement
- Outline or list of major points/ideas
- Any secondary sources you plan to use and where you found them
- Critical approach / theoretical framework that you will use to analyze texts
- Any questions you have or problems you anticipate

I want your proposal to be as detailed as possible, so that I can better help you. Hopefully, it will also prevent you from procrastinating too much!

In order to receive full points for the topic proposal (25 points), you must address all of the above items.