

# ENG 201 "Introduction to Literature" Final Essay

*Due Friday, May 5th – Turn in a hard copy in class*

*300 points or 30% of your grade*

You will be writing a 6-8 page critical essay, and you are free to come up with your own topic for the paper. However, you must use at least two readings by different authors. Remember that an essay that goes into more detail and depth will be much stronger than one that tries to cover too much ground. In addition, 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 will need to have a clear argument/thesis with plenty of supporting examples from the text(s). Your thesis should be clear, specific, relevant, debatable, and original. 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?

Everything in your essay should relate back to this central argument or thesis. Remember that an argument refers to a writer's attempt to establish the validity of a given position. 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 remember to make 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. The sources should include both online and traditional print sources. Be sure to include in-text citations as well as a Works Cited page, listing the sources you use (whether it is specific quotes or even ideas).

While I will be reading your topic proposals and commenting on them, I highly encourage you to come talk to me about your essays in addition to that. These essays are worth 30% of your grade, so you will

want to do well on them. You can come talk to me during any point in your writing process, whether you want help brainstorming ideas or revising your final draft.

## **Topic Proposal Memo**

*Due Monday, April 13th*

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 of major points/ideas
- Any 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, you must address all of the above items.