

ENGLISH 200

RESEARCH PAPER I

Guidelines

Topic: Select a topic (suggested below), or suggest one yourself. Please e-mail me on or before March 9 to let me know which topic you will be working on AND include a fully articulated **thesis statement** for your paper. The thesis statement can naturally be modified later when you are working on your paper, but I want you to have a solid starting point for this project in order to focus your research. The thesis statement serves to focus your research and writing process, and helps you stay on topic as you are working. The paper should be written in persuasive, elegant, and academically appropriate English.

Thesis statement example:

“The character of Richard II in Shakespeare’s historic tragedy with the same name initially appears as a strong man in total control of his destiny. He is described as royal, strong, and with a regal look and charisma. Initially, no one disputes his right to rule. This essay will discuss how Richard’s insistence on maintaining an outdated, feudal approach to governing, and his failure to adopt a Machiavellian paradigm leads to his downfall.”

Format: The finished paper should be double-spaced, ca 5-7 pages, and citing at least 3 secondary sources (no more than one may be an online source) in addition to your primary source(s). Naturally, you can have as many sources as you like above and beyond the three required. Articles found online which have previously been published in hardcopy count as printed sources.

Documentation: Either MLA or APA documentation styles are acceptable, though MLA is preferred. Hybrids or mixtures of the two are not. For more information on MLA and APA, please visit <http://www.asu.edu/duas/wcenter/handouts.html>

Research: I strongly recommend using the Hayden Library catalog as a starting point. Find at least one book that gives you a general introduction to your subject matter. However, since your paper is relatively short you will need to get to the point quickly, and you will need sources that deal with your topic specifically. Scholarly articles are perfect for this, and they are significantly shorter than books (usually 15-40 pages). Use the library online indexes to search the MLA Bibliography, The Humanities Full Text Abstract, and other indexes which focus on humanist research.

I suggest you use the online resources available to you from the ASU library. Another place to find many excellent articles in full text is <http://www.jstor.org> which is only accessible on campus. JSTOR articles have been previously published in hardcopy elsewhere and are therefore considered off-line sources.

Assistance:

The Hayden Library research librarians are very helpful and can assist you with tips on how to use the various indexes. If you need assistance and advice on how to formulate a workable thesis statement, feedback on your research and ideas for this paper, or any other project for this course, please contact me by email or talk to me during office hours.

Submission: The thesis statement for the paper is due October 6. The final draft of the paper is due **March 23 at midnight**. The preferred method of submission is to email the paper to me as an attachment. The file should be in MS Word, Word Perfect, or Rich Text format. The paper will be returned to you by email with comments embedded in the paper using MS Word’s comment feature.

Possible paper topics

1. Discuss the image of the hero as it is portrayed in the *Iliad*. What is the ideal of the hero in this work? Why are they sometimes considered tragic heroes? Use specific examples or characters to illustrate this conception. In what way does this conception reflect or challenge the contemporary concept of the hero? Does the image of the Greek hero make sense in our contemporary world?
2. Achilles' fall from heroism into barbarism.
3. Male friendship in the *Iliad*.
4. Describe the mourning process as seen in Achilles' reaction to the death of Patroklos. What other examples of similar behavior are shown in the *Iliad*? How are they different from modern America's customs of mourning?
5. A discussion of Dante's *Divine Comedy* as an epic in the Classical tradition.
6. Dante's *Comedy* as an intertextual hub of Classical and Christian literature.
7. A discussion of the sonnet form as particularly suitable for erotic and romantic poetry.
8. Inter-racial love in *Othello*: Empowerment or warning?
9. The dangers of female sexuality in *Othello*.
10. Domestic violence in *Othello*.
11. Concepts of honor in *Othello*.
12. Iago, Satan's "Father".
13. Rebellion vs. Christianity in Milton's *Paradise Lost*.
14. *Paradise Lost* as a Protestant Epic.
15. A discussion of the monstrous in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*.
16. "Satanic" creation in *Frankenstein*.
17. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* as an indictment of science.
18. Class and Culture in *A Streetcar Named Desire*
19. Southern Gothic: Sexuality and Insanity in *A Streetcar Named Desire*
20. Name your own topic!!