

ENGLISH 355

RESEARCH PAPER ASSIGNMENT

Guidelines

Topic: Select a topic (suggested below), or suggest one yourself. 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 This essay will discuss how Richard's insistence on maintaining an outdated, feudal approach to governing, and his failure to adopt a Machiavellian paradigm leads to his downfall.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 6-7 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. It is highly recommended that you download and consult the *English Department Guide to Style* at http://www.public.asu.edu/~cajsa/Guide2Style_complete.pdf

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).¹ 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 www.asu.edu/lib/resources/db/jstor.htm. JSTOR articles have been previously published in hardcopy elsewhere and are therefore considered off-line sources even if you download a digital version of the article.

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.

¹ Scholarly articles are articles published in peer-reviewed or refereed journals/periodicals. A scholarly periodical requires that each article submitted for publication be judged by an independent panel of experts (scholarly or scientific peers). Articles not approved by a majority of these peers are not accepted for publication by the journal.

Submission: The final draft of the paper is due **April 23 at midnight**. The paper should be submitted to the course Blackboard Safe Assignment drop box (<http://myasucourses.asu.edu>) . The file should be in MS Word or Rich Text format. Please name the attached file according to the naming convention “firstname_lastname_eng355_1.doc”. Example: If your name is Jane Doe, your file should be named “jane_doe_eng355_1.doc” or “jane_doe_eng355_1.rtf”

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. Medea’s motives - or the character of Medea (what makes her tick?) Is she a hero or a villain? Neither? Both?
2. “Budgeting for the afterlife” Finance and commerce in *Everyman*.
3. A Discussion of how King Richard II functions as an Aristotelian hero. Or not.
4. Moliere’s *Tartuffe* as a critique of Church influence on secular politics.
5. Moliere’s *Tartuffe* today: An contemporary reading of *Tartuffe* as a critique of modern day hypocrisy.
6. Female characterization in Behn’s *The Rover*.
7. A Bakhtinian/Carnevalesque reading of Aphra Behn’s *The Rover*.
8. Alcoholism and domestic violence in Holberg’s comedy *Jeppe of the Hill*.
9. Fathers, Daughters and Power in Shelley’s *The Cenci*.
10. Class and sexuality in Strindberg’s *Miss Julie*.
11. Darwinist theory in Strindberg’s *Miss Julie*.
12. Name your own topic!