

## Critical Research Paper

### WRITING ASSIGNMENT II: RESEARCH PAPER GUIDELINES

**Topic:** The first step, before commencing your research, is to articulate a working thesis statement. 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 This essay will discuss how Richard’s insistence on maintaining an outdated, feudal approach to governing, and his failure to adopt a Machiavellian paradigm leads to his downfall.”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 9-12 pages, and citing at least five 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>. The *English Department guide to Style* is an indispensable and highly recommended aid as well: [http://www.public.asu.edu/~cajsa/Guide2Style\\_complete.pdf](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). Use the library online indexes to search the MLA Bibliography, The Humanities Full Text Abstract, and other indexes which focus on humanist research (<http://asu.edu/lib/find/articles/humanit.htm>). Specific to 19th Century research is the Nineteenth Century Masterfile index, <http://www.asu.edu/lib/resources/db/ncmaster.htm>. Also, the British Humanities Index is a good resource: <http://www.asu.edu/lib/resources/db/bhi.htm>

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.asu.edu/lib/resources/db/jstor.htm>. JSTOR articles have been *previously published in hardcopy elsewhere* and are therefore considered off-line/hardcopy 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 final draft of the paper is due **April 23 at midnight**<sup>1</sup> (11:55 PM). The paper should be submitted to the course Blackboard Safe Assignment drop box (<http://myasucourses.asu.edu>). The file should be in MS Word, Word Perfect, or Rich Text format. The file should be in MS Word, Word Perfect, or Rich Text format. Please name the attached file according to the naming convention “initiallastname\_eng425\_paper.doc”. Example: If your name is Werther Young, your file should be named “wyoung\_eng425\_paper.doc” or “wyoung\_eng425\_paper.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. The impact on Edmund Burke’s theory of the sublime and the beautiful on Goethe’s *Sorrows of Young Werther*
2. Fredrika Bremer’s *A Diary*: Beatrice Cenci as a Feminine, Negative Role Model
3. Bremer’s *Flora Delphin*: Channeling Mary Wollstonecraft?
4. Blake’s *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*: Poeticizing Wollstonecraft’s *Vindication*?
5. Blake’s *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* and Questions of Race and Slavery
6. Blake and Popular Culture
7. Shelley’s *The Cenci* and Blake’s *Four Zoas*: Gazing on Evil
8. Romantic Responsibilities in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*
9. Homoeroticism in Byron’s *The Giaour* (or *Christabel*, or *The Vampyre*, or...)
10. Consuming (the) Other(s): Polidori’s *The Vampyre*
11. Desire and Loathing Strangely Mixed: The Unleashed Female in Coleridge’s *Christabel*
12. The Medusa’s Gaze: Female Vision in Shelley’s *The Cenci* and Keats’s *Lamia*
13. Sexuality and Insanity in Romantic Literature
14. Romantic Poetics and *The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner*
15. Romantic Ecology and *The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner*
16. “Her Eyes Were Wild”: Keats’s Fierce Females – *Lamia* and *La Belle Dame*
17. Pale Poets and Fanged Females in Romantic Literature
18. Demons, Fairies, and Other Unholy Lovers in Coleridge and Keats
19. Medieval Characters - Romantic Concerns (e.g. *Rime*, *Christabel*, “*Belle Dame*”, *The Giaour*, *Manfred*)
20. “Particle of My Divided Being”: Incest and Narcissism in Romantic Literature
21. A discussion of the monstrous in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*.
22. “My more than sister!”: Siblings, Sympathy and Sex in Romantic Narrative
23. “Satanic” creation in *Frankenstein*.
24. Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* as an indictment of science.
25. Goethe’s *Faust* and Byron’s *Manfred*
26. **Name your own topic - Recommended!**

You may select a paper topic of a work we have not yet covered in the semester. If so, you will obviously have to read that work ahead of time in order to be able to write about it in an informed manner. Please do not hesitate to select one of the later works – you will be rewarded later in the semester when you are actually ahead of schedule with your reading.

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<sup>1</sup> Note that the original deadline, April 16, has been changed to April 23.