

5. The Research Essay

The Research Essay

The research essay requires students to use multiple sources in order to establish a context within which they will situate their original thesis. It is both the longest and most complex essay of the semester and, therefore, requires a carefully considered sequence of pre-draft assignments that encourage students to develop their original idea, build a researched context for their argument, and structure their essay effectively. Because it uses skills from both lens and close reading skills, the research essay assignment sequence is typically the third of the course's three units. The typical length of a research essay is between ten and twelve pages.

Goals

- Teaching students to take part in academic dialogue by situating their own ideas in a researched context
- Familiarizing students with the skills and resources used in college level research
- Continuing to apply and develop both the writing and reasoning skills emphasized in the close reading and lens assignment sequences

Guidelines

- Texts: Because it is a research essay, students will choose most of their own texts. However, it is often beneficial to give students one or two texts to structure their work. These texts can serve as the topic of the assignment (e.g. everyone does research on the same film) or as a theoretical grounding for their research (e.g. everyone researches around the same theoretical foundation).
- The research question: Since they will be responsible for supplying most of the texts for this assignment, students should be given a bit more freedom to choose their own topics. It is possible to do this while still keeping the focus on the assignment very specific (e.g. “explore the film *Rebecca* from an anthropological perspective” or “analyze the historical transformation of satire as a genre using a contemporary example”). Because students are given freedom to pursue their own interests, you will want to be able to give them feedback and make sure they are on track before they write their essays. Be sure to assign some sort of research proposal so that you can troubleshoot problems early in the writing process.
- The writing prompt: In addition to the usual formatting specifications (see the writing prompt guidelines), be sure to clearly articulate 1. the number of sources students are required to use on the assignment (typically at least five), 2. the types of sources students are and aren't allowed to use, and 3. the requirement that students directly engage with the central idea of each of each source (i.e. they may not just quote a peripheral idea). Placing these requirements up front will provide clear guidelines to refer back to when encouraging revision and explaining your grades.
- Pre-draft assignments: The research essay assignment sequence should require at least three pre-draft assignments. It is recommended that two assignments focus on developing and researching the essay's central claim and another should emphasize an element of the academic essay (most likely evidence, analysis, or structure, since these are especially important in the research essay). Model pre-draft assignments for the research essay are listed on the following page.

The FLIP: First Year Library Instruction Program

During the research unit your students will have one class session with a librarian to introduce them to our library's resources.

OVERVIEW

The FLIP program consists of the following

1. A Library Research Session
2. Drop-in Reference Lab (encouraged but voluntary)
3. IM librarian embedded in LATTE course (pilot project)
4. Assessments

1. Library Research Session

Workshops have been scheduled for March 11 through April 9. Sessions are timed to connect with the research component of the UWS. Instructors and Librarians should meet one-on-one before March 11th to discuss the type of session needed. Librarians should customize the session to the needs of the instructor and the content of the research assignment. Four workshop scenarios are described on a separate document.

2. Drop-in Reference Lab- March 31st –April 10th, Monday through Thursdays, 6-9 p.m.

Students will be encouraged to sign-up for an appointment with a librarian to get help for the research assignment.

3. IM reference librarian hours embedded in LATTE course – pilot project

Some librarians will experiment with links to their IM office hours listed under instructor office hours (right-hand block) in LATTE course with an added link to other ways to get help from librarians and instructional technologists.

4. Assessment

Two assessments will take place during the last 5 minutes of the library session:

- a. Feedback form – filled out by instructor on librarian-led session
Please give constructive feedback to help us improve our sessions
- b. 3-2-1 Self-Assessment by students at end of library session

Three assessments will take place after the program is completed:

- c. librarian/instructional technologist feedback – group debriefing/feedback session on program
- d. instructor feedback session – during Comp Camp
- e. student feedback on evening drop-in sessions

Learning Goals for First Year Library Instruction Program

- 1. Students understand the difference between searching Google and accessing scholarly resources through library databases.**

Specifically: students will know how to access and use our new one-search system Brandeis Scholar. They will understand that by using this tool they are searching scholarly information sources such as peer-reviewed journal articles and books.

- 2. Students have a basic understanding of the research process and scholarly communication generally.**

Specifically: students understand that scholars build their research on previous scholarship and cite other scholar's work, that research is often discipline-based, and that when they do research for their assignment they need to base their paper on existing research, not just collect a few citations that support an argument they have already developed.

- 3. Students develop basic skills in critically evaluating information sources and know the difference between a scholarly source and a popular source.**

Specifically: Students will be able to identify a minimum of five criteria that indicate whether an information source can be considered reliable and scholarly.

- 4. Students understand how and why to cite a resource.**

Specifically: Students can identify the basic components of a citation and use citations in the research paper they write.

- 5. Students know where to get additional assistance.**

Specifically: Students know at least two ways to get additional help from a librarian (email, IM, phone, desk)

Loosely based on the Association of College and Research Libraries Information Literacy Standards.

FLIP Workshop Scenarios

Please choose one of the following scenarios to meet the requirements of the library instruction session part of the FLIP program. These scenarios can be modified to meet the needs of your writing seminar and students. Please keep in the mind the program learning goals as outlined in “FLIP Program Learning Goals” when meeting with your librarian and discussing session choice and needs. The session should focus on the content of the research assignment for your writing seminar.

1. Presentation format

Location: Vershbow Training Room in Library or your classroom with laptops

A librarian will cover the learning goals outlined in the “FLIP Program Learning Goals” through lecture, demonstration, discussion, and some hands-on time. The session will be tailored to your research assignment. If you have not taught a library session before, this might be a good introduction for both you and your students.

2. Problem-solving workshop

Location: Your classroom with AV/computer equipment

This format showcases the “librarian as problem-solver.” You might assign your students a preliminary, brief (2-3 resources) bibliography on their research topic due the day of the session. Provide the librarian with a list of student research topics one week prior to the session. Ask students to come to the session with whatever questions, problems, or difficulties they encountered when researching their topic. The librarian can focus on answering student questions, going over search strategies and “slipping in” other items on the “FLIP Program Learning Goals”

3. Team-teaching/discussion

Location: Your classroom

This format would be most like a regular UWS class session, with a discussion covering the “FLIP Program Learning Goals.” This kind of discussion generally needs more preparation and a clear motivator for the students, since these topics will feel abstract and simplistic without application. You or your librarian can develop in-class activities to put the discussion in context, or you might workshop a volunteer draft, or set up an exercise or wiki in which students try to derive the rules themselves, leading into a discussion about their logic and the principles they’ve used. Some of you may have used a variation of this last idea in citation, in which students are given a set of citations and asked to derive the rules and their reasons.

4. Instructor-Led Session in Consultation with Librarian

Location: Your classroom or Vershbow

This format is for experienced instructors who feel up-to-speed with the content of the “FLIP Program Learning Goals.” This can include varying levels of librarian support depending on your needs and expertise. You can simply meet with the librarian before your session to go over what and how you will cover the learning goals, or you can co-teach the session with your librarian. This session can be in any format – hands-on, lecture/discussion etc.

Pre-Draft Assignments: Research Essay

UWS instructors are required to assign at least two pre-drafts for the research essay. It is recommended that one pre-draft assignment focus primarily on the research process and another focus on a specific “element of the academic essay.” Because the research essay will be the longest piece of writing most UWS students have ever composed, it is often helpful to focus on structure. Though I offer potential variations on these assignments in a few cases, they have been left somewhat vague in order to allow instructors to creatively adapt them to their own courses in more specific ways.

Pre-draft assignments should not be self-contained. In addition to using them as building blocks for the lens essay, instructors are encouraged to use pre-draft assignments as foundations for in class exercises. In most cases, I relate these assignments to exercises that can be performed either in class or on Webct message boards (or both). Because the research essay unit is usually the longest, you might consider assigning more the two required pre-drafts.

Assignment #1: Source Analysis

Ask students to write 1-2 pages complicating and analyzing the argument of one of the sources for their research essay (this usually works best with secondary sources). This assignment allows students to practice their analytical skills—an important “element of the academic essay”—while beginning to define their own position in relation to the broader discourse on their research topic. Because of its narrow focus, this assignment has the potential to lead to over reliance on one source in the research essay. It is important to remind students that this essay is meant to model the kind of analysis they should be doing less formally for every secondary source they will use in their paper.

Assignment #2: Annotated Bibliography

In addition to motivating students to think critically about their sources, this assignment allows instructors to check for deficiencies and biases in the collection of texts students have chosen to use in their research essays. Guidelines for both the composition of the bibliography and the contents of the annotations should be clearly defined by the instructor. The instructor should specify what kinds of sources primary/secondary, academic/non-academic, print/electronic, &c. students are required to gather. Each annotation should include: 1) a brief description of the author’s thesis, 2) a sentence or two describing how this thesis relates to the broader discourse on the topic, and 3) a description of how the student will use the source in his or her paper.

Assignment #3: Literature Review

This assignment can take the place of an annotated bibliography, or it can be written after it (possibly for extra credit). The literature review places the sources (usually only the secondary sources) for the research essay in dialogue, outlining a few of the major topics of debate and the major critical positions on each topic. A literature review is *not* thesis driven; it merely describes the context within which the student will situate the thesis of his or her research essay.

Assignment #4: Peer Critique of Introductory Paragraph (Roadmap)

After discussing the roadmap sentence as a common component of introductions in longer essays, ask students to draft the introductory paragraphs for their research essays and bring several copies to class. In small groups, students should discuss 1) the construction of the road map sentence and 2) the effectiveness of the structure the sentence proposes for the essay. I find that requiring a road map sentence in longer essays is important not only in making student writing easier for a reader to understand, but also in keeping students focused in the structure of their essays. In order to save class time, this assignment can also be done on Webct (especially good for classes that meet only once a week). Have students post their introductory paragraphs online and assign two students to respond to each post in the same manner they would in small groups in class. In addition to serving as a sort of mini peer review, this assignment allows the instructor access to each student's thesis, motive, and essay structure before the lens essay is written, allowing him or her to troubleshoot off track assignments *before* the student composes an entire draft.

Assignment #5: Reverse Outline

Because research essays often require a bit more time for revision, you might consider assigning a written exercise after the initial draft has been turned in. In addition to highlighting a specific skill, the placement of this assignment will make students more focused on the revision process as a whole. The best assignment for teaching structure is a reverse outline. Ask each student to go through his or her research essay writing down the central claim of each paragraph in the form of a formal outline. In addition to emphasizing basic skills—such as the idea that every paragraph must have a central claim—this assignment gets students to reflect on the structure of their own work. Though it is possible to turn this into an in class exercise, I have found that the reverse outline often makes hidden redundancies, logical gaps, and structural indirection more obvious to the author, thus reducing the need for peer feedback. In addition to the reverse outline itself, you might ask each student to write a brief reflection detailing the revision ideas they have come up with during the process of writing the outline.

Sample Research Essay Questions

1. Select a performer, composer, performance practice, or musical genre to research. Using a variety of sources, discuss how your chosen topic sheds light on the connection between music and madness.
2. In this essay, you'll interrogate a paradox, contradiction, tension or gap in an apocalyptic film of your choosing; drawing on Catherine Keller's theory of the "apocalypse pattern" or René Girard's theory of sacrifice, and other sources that you locate, you'll develop an argument about the significance of the way the film employs apocalypse.
3. Research one feature of university life. In a 10-12 page essay, analyze what it reveals about the university's "civilizing process," and about how members of the university community have both endorsed and resisted that process.
4. Drawing on our discussions of the possible risks of biocolonialism, biopiracy, and bioinformatics within bioengineering and the social effects of interactive machines and cultural interfaces, locate an instance in the realm of art, televisual media, computer technology, business, science, and/or the law where machines replace humans or create a new type of human interaction. Make an argument about the effects such changes could have on a specific context of your choosing, and discuss how justifiable they are in either ethical, economic, and/or scientific terms. Inform your argument with relevant research.
5. Choose a film to evaluate, test, explore, or critique the assigned critical theories. Locate sources about the film to help you make your case.
6. Choose one text and discuss how Antarctic fact and fantasy conflict, play off each other, or become confused. How does the tension between fact and fiction produce a problem, insight, or set of contested meanings around Antarctica? What does this dialectic say about the process of exploration itself? About Antarctica as a distinct place in history?
7. Choose any Shakespeare play and research its treatment of a particular aspect or element of love (such as courtship, marriage, sexuality, or gender roles) to argue for how this representation reflects Shakespeare's commentary on Renaissance notions of love and relationships. You may also choose to consider how Shakespeare adapts his source texts in order to present his critique.
8. Choose an apocalyptic text (or set of texts) that fascinates and puzzles you--and illuminates something about the role of the apocalyptic pattern in contemporary U.S. culture. Appropriate selections might range from television commercials to music to scholarly books. Develop an argument about your core text or set of texts by situating it in a social or historical context and drawing on at least one critical framework.

Annotated Syllabus: An Argument Requiring Research (from Kerry Walk, Princeton University)

Week 7

Class 1

- writing assignment*; finding a topic and moving from topic to question/problem
→ We discuss the sources students have read with a view to coming up with topics. Students do a series of freewriting exercises as part of the discussion. They leave with a strong interest.

Class 2

- Library session on available resources, evaluating sources
→ We introduce students via an electronic treasure hunt to the Main Catalog and some other electronic databases. Students get familiar with Firestone through a fetch-it exercise. The skim and report on the print sources they've found, and we discuss the principles they've used to evaluate the sources.

Week 8—Proposal Conferences

About Proposal Conferences: At the end of this week, we'll discuss your ideas for your essay. *Come to conference prepared to present your ideas.* You should, of course, have identified the cartoons you plan to focus on and at least a few other sources you plan to use.

Class 1

- Reading Assignment: Your research materials
- Writing Assignment: Primary source analysis
- In-class: Moving from topic to question; workshop on structure and stitching
→ Students do a freewrite comparing their current and their previous experiences writing research papers; we discuss, focusing on current challenges. Students fill in the following sentence, and we discuss: "I am research _____ because I
• want to know _____ in order to understand how/why _____. We read and discuss an excellent student essay in terms of research problem/question; source use (we look at the reference list; also, pairs do the form/function exercise, and we discuss); and stitching (different pairs look at boxed transition points, and we discuss principles).

Class 2

- Reading Assignment: Your research materials
- Writing Assignment: Paper proposal
- In-class: Workshop paper proposals; workshop on paragraphing; discussion of oral presentations
→ We workshop 3 paper proposals as a large group, then small groups workshop the rest. We try to help the writer refine the question or problem, make stronger connections with the sources, and expand the range of sources. For the paragraphing workshop, we do the paragraph puzzle in pairs, generate the 4 Fs (focus, flow, form, and function), look at a paragraph from some excellent student writing, then look at some problematic paragraphs and

advise the writer. We finish by discussing the oral presentation; if time, we generate categories for evaluating the presentations.

Week 9—Research Presentations

About Research Presentations: Prepare a 3-minute presentation on an interesting aspect of your research. The best way to go is to use a problem/solution structure: make your audience aware of a question, problem, or issue in the materials you're examining, then suggest how you've addressed or worked through it. Visual aids are essential!

Classes 1 & 2

- In-class: Research Presentations
→ I usually do this in two classes. Three-minute presentations. No A/V (takes up too much time). One question (perhaps pre-assigned?) after each presentation.

Week 10—Group Conferences

About Group Conferences: We'll be having group conferences on your drafts this time around. You will need to read the drafts of the other members of your Writing Group before your conference and be prepared for discussion. While you need not write out your **Draft Responses***, you should make copious notes to speak from.

Class 1

- **Draft of Essay #3** due with Draft Cover Letter*
- In-class: Workshop on structure (line of argument)
→ We do my lesson on line of argument, but I precede this by walking students through two "befores" and "afters."

Class 2

- Reading Assignment: Workshop materials
- Writing Assignment: Draft Response* to draft writers
- In-class: Draft workshop, focusing on thesis, structure, sources
→ Self-explanatory, but we really do focus on structure and source use a lot. I want to see a dynamic structure, a strong line of argument, and a broad repertoire of source use, to say nothing of proper source integration and citation.

Week 11

Class 1

- Reading Assignment: Workshop materials
- Writing Assignment: Draft responses to draft writers*
- In-class: Draft workshop and some other needed workshop
→ Self-explanatory, but the student on the hot seat pre-circulates his or her own draft this time. We want to workshop the latest version. We also do another workshop on whatever's needed by the most number of students.

Class 2

- Reading Assignment: Workshop materials
- Writing Assignment: Draft responses to draft writers*; also, bring 3 copies of your latest draft for your writing group
- In-class: Draft workshop and some other needed workshop
 - Self-explanatory, but the student on the hot seat pre-circulates his or her own draft this time. We want to workshop the latest version. Writing groups meet to look at introductions and/or some other aspect of their drafts. They set up a time to continue their meeting outside of class.

Week 12

Revision of Essay #3 due with Revision Cover Letter*

Sample Research Proposal Assignments

Sample Research Proposal Assignment #1

The proposal is your first step in your research paper writing. Its function is to provide space to begin brainstorming and narrowing down your research topic, generate ideas relating to the research topic and the essays read in class, and formulate questions you may wish to consider when writing your paper.

The proposal is also an excellent medium for you to consider what main ideas you are going to have in order for you to begin writing your paper. It is also important for you to start considering what frame you will be placing around your topic. Another way to say it: consider what ideas you will use in to discuss your topic. Instead of an outline, which assumes that you are already have some idea of the structure of your paper, this assignment discusses what your paper might be about. As a result, you should see the proposal as an exploration of your topic, your ideas on the topic, your reasons for choosing the topic, and what you will need to do in order to complete your essay. Students often find that creating a research question is helpful because in-depth questions by definition, demand explorative answers. Within those answers, you may find that your topic narrowing itself, or you may find a new topic that is more interesting to you.

You may approach your proposal any way you feel, but please make sure you address at the very least the following: Indicate your topic, problem, or idea you will be exploring.

- Why does this topic interest you personally? (It is very important that you a topic that interest you because if you aren't interested, you will not do a good job.)
- What questions do you want to address in your paper?
- How do those questions or ideas intersect with what we have been discussing in class?
- How focused is your topic? Have you picked a specific theme, idea, author?
- Do you have any ideas on how you think the paper will be structured?
- If you have a preliminary position in relation to your topic and research question, indicate what that position is.

Sample Research Proposal Assignment #2

The purpose of the proposal is to help you to formulate a topic so that you may begin your research with a definite but flexible goal in mind. Try to be as specific as possible in thinking through your proposal, but be open to revising it as you do research and receive feedback. For your proposal, you will need two research sources and at least one theoretical “framing” concept from the works we read in class. Base your proposal on the work you began in Paper 2, adding one more scholarly secondary or primary source. You may also consider the usefulness of other concepts in the texts we have read and discussed in class. Scholarly sources usually include a bibliography, citations, and footnotes, are often published by university presses, and place arguments in conversation with other scholarly sources. **Please address the following questions in your proposal in paragraph form.**

- What is the **topic** that you plan to investigate? Remember that your topic should be suited to a 10-page essay, not a book.
- What is the **research question** that you want to ask?
- Which of the texts that we have discussed in class will you use to build a conceptual **frame** for discussing your topic, or research material? What theoretical material (i.e., terms and concepts) might be helpful? How could you go about using them?
- List the **bibliographical information for your new sources**. What kind of source is it $\frac{3}{4}$ scholarly or popular, print or electronic, book or article? Why did you choose it? How do you think it will help you to limit or direct your topic?
- What other kinds of sources will you be looking for?
- What related questions do you have that may help to focus your topic?
- What is your **tentative hypothesis or argument**?

No draft of the research paper will be read until the proposal and the bibliography have been received and approved.

Sample Research Proposal Assignment #3 (from Nika Hedges)

- Two entries due Thursday, February 26, 2004, with final pre-proposal essay
- Four entries due Thursday, March 11, 2004 (two revised and two more)
- Final version with at least 6 entries due Thursday, March 25, with the first draft of your research paper.

Over the next six weeks, you will develop an annotated bibliography, or a list of texts consulted with remarks on their scope and use for your project. The completed annotated bibliography must include no fewer than six substantial sources, of which at least one should be a book-length source, at least one should be an article from a scholarly journal, and at least one should be an internet source. Each of the entries must have two parts: the bibliographic information (use MLA style, found in the Prentice Hall Reference Guide to Grammar and Usage) and a short (1-3 paragraph) summary of the author's central argument, his or her objective and audience, the broad debates engaged by the text, and its usefulness to your own project. It is important that you phrase your annotations as summaries of arguments rather than summaries of information. When you are writing, use phrases like, "According to so-and-so..." and "So-and-so argues that..." Sometimes your sources will present themselves as informative or objective rather than argumentative, but this just means that you will have to read more closely – read "between the lines" – in order to ascertain the author's perspective on the topic. Feel free to use direct quotations in your summaries. The best annotated bibliographies will also discuss how the argument you are summarizing relates to your other sources. You will be developing the annotated bibliography over time, as you pursue your research. You are responsible to produce a two-entry bibliography to turn in with your pre-proposal essay on February 26; you should add a third and fourth entry, as well as revising the first two, for March 11, and on April 5 you will turn in a complete six-entry annotated bibliography with your proposal. Note that your bibliography should *not* include the texts we have read in class; it is a separate assignment that reflects your ongoing research. The annotated bibliography will be graded pass/fail; a bibliography that is not passing will have to be resubmitted until it earns a passing grade.

Sample Research Proposal Assignment #4

Your research proposal should include:

1) A brief description of your “case” topic, problem, controversy, event or text your paper will investigate. Try to be as specific as possible in your description without summarizing the whole text, event, debate, etc... . Try to show how your “case” intersects with themes discussed in class by using some of the language you’ve learned in class (about “Urban Life,” about “The Family,” about “The Self”) to give shape to your description of your “case”.

2) An assessment of existing scholarship on your topic. Briefly relate what others say about your particular “case” and the issues at stake in it. This is where you put secondary texts, texts that you have found in your research or have been provided in class, in conversation with one another. Cite the scholars and texts you have read and begin putting them in debate/dialogue about your “case” and the issues at stake in it, using their language and your own to give shape to these debates. Remember to use parenthetical citations—(Roberts 35)—*for* all quoted text and put quotation marks around words and phrases that are not your own.

3) Begin to lay out your own preliminary position on your “case” text, using the appropriate framing terms/ideas from the texts assigned in class for your particular position, once again putting quotation marks around words or phrases that are not your own. As you briefly lay out your own position, you may want to think about these questions: Does your position extend or challenge existing scholarship? Does it combine old ideas with new texts in order to complicate or challenge those ideas? Some instructors may not ask you to know the answers to these questions yet, others will. But what you want to impart in this section of your proposal and what you want to think about as you are working on your research assignment is, “What do I expect my particular paper to contribute to the existing body of scholarship on my subject or how will it help scholars make sense of new texts [as in the “reality-based” television scenario] that have not yet been thoroughly researched and theorized?” Do these new texts extend or complicate some of the existing ideas about your subject in ways that change the terms of debate about your subject?

4) What still needs to be answered? Sometimes, depending on when it is assigned, instructors ask you to write a fourth section of your proposal in which they ask you to formulate questions that still need to be answered and to think about the areas you still need to research in order to get your paper off the ground. Refer to “Stage Four” of this tutorial to help you consider the kinds of questions you might want to pose in this section. But these questions should rise out of what you have already presented in the proposal and how you have presented it. Look carefully at the first three sections or paragraphs—what’s missing.

Sample Research Proposal Assignment #5

The proposal is your first step in your research paper writing. its function is to provide space to begin brainstorming and narrowing down your research topic, generate ideas relating to the research topic and the essays read in class, and formulate questions you may wish to consider when writing your paper.

The proposal is also an excellent medium for you to consider what main ideas you are going to have in order for you to begin writing your paper. It is also important for you to start considering what frame you will be placing around your topic. Another way to say it: consider what ideas you will use in to discuss your topic. Instead of an outline, which assumes that you are already have some idea of the structure of your paper, this assignment discusses what your paper might be about. As a result, you should see the proposal as an exploration of your topic, your ideas on the topic, your reasons for choosing the topic, and what you will need to do in order to complete your essay. Students often find that creating a research question is helpful because in-depth questions by definition, demand explorative answers. Within those answers, you may find that your topic narrowing itself, or you may find a new topic that is more interesting to you.

You may approach your proposal any way you feel, but please make sure you address at the very least the following: Indicate your topic, problem, or idea you will be exploring.

Why does this topic interest you personally? (It is very important that you a topic that interest you because if you aren't interested, you will not do a good job.)

What questions do you want to address in your paper?

How do those questions or ideas intersect with what we have been discussing in class?

How focused is your topic? Have you picked a specific theme, idea, author?

Do you have any ideas on how you think the paper will be structured?

If you have a preliminary position in relation to your topic and research question, indicate what that position is.

Sample Annotated Bibliography Assignments

Sample Annotated Bibliography Assignment #1 (from Michael Cripps)

The annotated bibliography must include four substantial sources that you plan to use in your research paper. Of the four sources, at least one should be a book-length source, and at least one should be an article from a scholarly journal. You must let me know in advance if your annotated bibliography will not conform to these guidelines. Each of the four entries must have two parts: the bibliographic information and a short (1-3 paragraph) summary of the author's central argument. It is important that you phrase your annotations as summaries of arguments rather than summaries of information. When you are writing, use phrases like, "According to so-and-so...", and "So-and-so argues that..." Sometimes your sources will present themselves as informative or objective rather than argumentative, but this just means that you will have to read more closely-read "between the lines"-in order to ascertain where the author is coming from and what his or her perspective on the topic is. Feel free to use direct quotations in your summaries. The best annotated bibliographies will also discuss how the argument you are summarizing relates to your other sources. For the bibliographical format, use the "The Humanities: MLA Style" format that begins on page 83 of Diana Hacker's *Research and Documentation in the Electronic Age*. Read through this section (pp.83-111) to familiarize yourself with the MLA bibliographical format. Since most of you right now, will cite either books, or journal articles, pp.90 and 99 are particularly useful. Please note:

1. No late annotated bibliographies will be accepted.
2. You must earn a passing grade on your research paper in order to pass the course.

Sample entry:

Williams, Eric. *Capitalism and Slavery*. 1944. New York: Perigree, 1980. A ground breaking study that provides a materialist analysis of slavery in the British empire. According to Williams, his book "is strictly an economic study of the role of Negro slavery and the slave trade in providing the capital which financed the Industrial Revolution in England, and of mature industrial capitalism in destroying the slave system." (1) In Williams's account, the value of the tobacco colonies of southeastern North America and the sugar islands of the Caribbean in producing staple articles for the export market laid the foundation for the rise of the West India Interest. By 1832, however, the British West Indies had become "socially an inferno...(and) economically, what was worse, an anachronism" (133). The rising capitalist class in England opposed the West India Interest not on humanitarian ground, argues Williams, but rather because it was unprofitable, fundamentally monopolistic, and required protectionist trade policies. Paradoxically, Williams writes, "the Negroes had been stimulated to freedom by the development of the very wealth which their labor had created" (208). This book is helpful to my project in that Williams provides an historical overview of the economics of slavery before the Industrial Revolution.

Sample Annotated Bibliography Assignment #2

A bibliography lists in alphabetical order the texts that a writer has read or cited during his research. An annotated bibliography follows each bibliographic entry with a brief evaluative summary called an annotation. The annotation describes the topic of the text, the author's purpose in writing it, and the intended audience, whether scholarly or non-scholarly; it evaluates the usefulness and reliability of the text, and describes the scope of the author's point of view, objective, assumptions, and political agenda. Annotated bibliographies record citation information for the sources consulted so that plagiarism may be avoided, and provide a basis for deciding whether or not the text will be useful for the project.

For the Annotated Bibliography, you need FIVE sources from your research, including 1) a scholarly book, 2) a scholarly article, and 3) an Internet source. Scholarly sources usually include a bibliography, citations, and footnotes, are often published by university presses, and refer to other scholarly sources. The texts we read in class should not appear on the AB. Since textbooks and encyclopedias are not acceptable research sources, they should not be included on the AB.

You should use the following format:

I. General introduction . A paragraph explaining your research topic.

II. Five annotated entries, in alphabetical order by the author's last name , bibliographic information in MLA style, and call number. Each entry should be followed by an annotation in paragraph form that gives the following information:

- 1) what kind of source it is $\frac{3}{4}$ book or article, scholarly or popular, print or electronic,
- 2) the specific subject the author is writing about,
- 3) what the author seeks to discover, prove, or challenge,
- 4) the broad debates the author engages in, and how he uses other sources, and
- 5) how the source will contribute to your research.

Sample Annotated Bibliography Assignment #3

A bibliography lists in alphabetical order the texts that a writer has read or cited during his research. An annotated bibliography follows each bibliographic entry with a brief evaluative summary called an annotation. The annotation describes the topic of the text, the author's purpose in writing it, and the intended audience, whether scholarly or non-scholarly; it evaluates the usefulness and reliability of the text, and describes the scope of the author's point of view, objective, assumptions, and political agenda. Annotated bibliographies record citation information for the sources consulted so that plagiarism may be avoided, and provide a basis for deciding whether or not the text will be useful for the project.

For the Annotated Bibliography, you need FIVE sources from your research, including 1) a scholarly book, 2) a scholarly article, and 3) an Internet source. Scholarly sources usually include a bibliography, citations, and footnotes, are often published by university presses, and refer to other scholarly sources. The texts we read in class should not appear on the AB. Since textbooks and encyclopedias are not acceptable research sources, they should not be included on the AB.

You should use the following format:

- I. General introduction . A paragraph explaining your research topic.
- II. Five annotated entries, in alphabetical order by the author's last name, bibliographic information in MLA style, and call number. Each entry should be followed by an annotation in paragraph form that gives the following information:
 - 1) what kind of source it is book or article, scholarly or popular, print or electronic,
 - 2) the specific subject the author is writing about,
 - 3) what the author seeks to discover, prove, or challenge,
 - 4) the broad debates the author engages in, and how he uses other sources,
 - and 5) how the source will contribute to your research.

Self Assessment: The Research Essay (Steve Fabian, Princeton University)

WHERE AM I? Assessing your research

Objectives: To assess the progress on your research paper to better know what has been done and what needs more work; specific practice at formulating analytical questions

- 1) Put the research paper assignment into your own words (what you think this assignment asks you to do; one to three sentences).

- 2) What have you done so far to complete the assignment? What do you think you have left to do?

- 3) What is your best source so far and why? How did you find it?

- 4) Based upon what you've read so far, offer what you believe are TWO ANALYTICAL QUESTIONS about your incident (*hint: analytical questions usually start with **how** or **why***). For example, if I were researching "magic" in Malaysia, I might ask: Why do some Muslims (like R. Lee's informants) join esoteric groups? How does ritual (as suggested by R. Lee) serve to contain such powerful emotions as awe and fear in an extraordinary experience?

After completing 1-4 above, share your responses with your writing group. Allow approximately 10 minutes at end of session for class-wide discussion of good analytical questions, and the relationship between analytical question(s) and thesis.

(My gratitude to Patricia Kennedy, Lecturer, Princeton Writing Program, for the idea for this exercise.)

Sample Peer Review Assignment #1

On a separate sheet of paper evaluate the student essay at hand. Write your name and the name of the student you are editing on your editing sheet. Please answer all questions in complete, and full, sentences.

1. Does the paper offer the reader a clear *position* regarding the principle of exclusion that we have seen in some of the texts we've read in class? Do not simply answer this question with a yes or no, *but—in a few sentences—summarize* the writer's position.
2. Does the paper have a *thesis statement* that succinctly states the overall argument of the essay? If so, underline it in double lines and write it down on your peer editing sheet. If you cannot find one, think about what the writer has written and suggest one. Write your suggested thesis on your peer editing sheet as well.
3. What are the two (or three, if applicable) texts used by the author to develop his or her position? How is the author using these *frameworks*? Provide a brief (3 sentences or so per example) summary of the way in which you think the writer is using *each* of these texts.
4. In addition to your analysis of 2 two texts, I had also asked that you use an example of a *personal experience of a public space* to support your position regarding the principle of exclusion that we have seen organizing many of the texts on city life. What experience does the author provide? Evaluate its overall effectiveness (in other words, does the author clearly describe both the public space and its significance?)
5. Evaluate the writer's use of paragraph structure. In general, are they paragraphs coherent: that is, do they stick to one point or do they wander from point to point? Furthermore, do they have good topic sentences which explain to the reader, at the beginning of the paragraph, the direction the paragraph will take? Choose *one* example of what you think is a focused paragraph and *another* of an unfocused one and, in the margins of the writer's essay, explain in detail why the paragraph is coherent or incoherent.
6. Look carefully at the movement from paragraph to paragraph throughout the essay. Does the writer provide transitions between paragraphs to clarify the direction the essay is taking? Go back to *each* paragraph and, in the margins, evaluate the transitions. For example, look closely at the connections between each paragraph and tell the writer if they are effective, or if the relations between paragraphs are too abrupt and need more effective transitions.
7. Suggest a few concrete revisions for the paper? In other words, what would you do to improve it? Again, be specific in your comments.

Sample Peer Review Assignment #2

Follow the directions so that you can provide honest feedback on your partner's paper. Be sure to mark the text as appropriate and answer the questions on this sheet for the draft. Be honest and be specific.

Is there a thesis? Wherever you find it...underline it! What is the motive? Circle it.

What is the main argument of this paper?

Read each paragraph and come up with its main idea. List each main idea in the margin. If there are multiple main ideas, say that, as that is a problem.

In each paragraph find the sentence that you think is the strongest topic sentence: it introduces and sign posts the ideas of the paragraph, but also reflects the thesis.

Underline the topic sentence wherever you find it.

For each major point, do you see a CLEAR relation to the thesis and has the author EXPLICITLY shown how the paper's ideas relates to the thesis

Essay One Peer Workshop (example 2)

Read your partner's paper once in its entirety.

Now go back and assess the draft for the following. Mark the paper as appropriate and prepare a TWO page, DOUBLE-SPACED letter for your peer. Bring TWO copies to class on Wednesday: one for your partner and one for me.

Underline the thesis.

Circle the motive.

Are all three texts introduced in the introduction with clear reference point as to the focus of this paper? When the texts are introduced are the title and author included?

Write the main idea of each paragraph in the margin.

Look at this list and compare it to the thesis. Do the ideas of this paper connect to and develop this thesis?

For each major point, has the author used material from each text?

Does the author explore not just what he believes to be true but also how and why it is true?

Does the conclusion draw the major points together and re-assert the thesis in a fresh, compelling way?

Use of MLA?

Any major grammar or mechanics issues that you found problematic?

For each major point, are a variety of sources brought in to discuss it?

Look at the MLA:

- are the in-text citations correct?
- is the works cited page correct? Check the citation formats.
- does the author have 8 sources used; are 5 scholarly?

List 5 questions or issues you want to know more about that the author introduces or has neglected to address.

Sample Peer Review Assignment #3

You will review the Grading Criteria that I handed out to you earlier in the semester. Pay careful attention to the descriptions of what defines each letter grade.

Read the paper through in its entirety and grade the report.

In a two-page, double-spaced letter, explain why you graded the report as you did using specific examples from the report to support your grade.

Focus on the following areas:

Argument:

Working with Texts, including the case and multiple frames

Organization/Structure

Grammar and Mechanics

Language/Voice

**The research paper meets all of the minimum requirements as outline on the assignment sheet provided in the course pack. Any paper that does not meet all of the stated requirements cannot receive a passing grade.

Abstract Assignment (Daniella Kukrechtova)

[For Instructors]

Abstracts are very common in academic writing, and they have a fairly standard form. In essence, abstracts inform the reader of six bits of information about the piece of writing being summarized:

1. title (specific and detailed) indicating the question you investigated. It should be complete enough to stand on its own without the abstract.
2. introduction to the topic providing context or background (do not repeat or rephrase your title or any sentences from your paper).
3. objectives/ purpose
 - o What is your reason for writing?
 - o What is your main idea?
 - o What is the scope of your work (a generalized approach? A specific situation?)
4. methodology/approach
 - o What kinds of evidence do you provide?
 - o How do you try to convince the reader of the validity of your main idea? o How did you go about solving or making progress on the problem?
5. summary of the results
 - o What are the consequences of the problem or issue that you are discussing?
6. a statement of conclusions
 - o What new knowledge are you bringing to your field?
 - o What are the implications of your research? Are they generalizable or specific to a particular case? Be careful not to use evaluative language; *report* instead of *comment* on your findings.
7. Possibly some call for future research.

Whatever kind of research you are doing, your abstract should provide the reader with the answers to the following questions: What are you asking? Why is it important? How will you study it? What will you use to demonstrate your conclusions? What are those conclusions? What do they mean?

[For Students]

What is an abstract?

An abstract is a self-contained, short, and powerful statement that describes a larger work. Components vary according to discipline; an abstract of a social science or scientific work may contain the scope, purpose, results, and contents of the work. An abstract of a humanities work may contain the thesis, background, and conclusion of the larger work. An abstract is not a review, nor does it evaluate the work being abstracted. While it contains key words found in the larger work, the abstract is an original document rather than an excerpted passage.

When do people write abstracts?

- when submitting articles to journals, especially online journals
- when applying for research grants
- when writing a book proposal
- when completing the Ph.D. dissertation or MA thesis
- when writing a proposal for a conference paper
- when writing a proposal for a book chapter

Qualities of a Good Abstract

An effective abstract has the following qualities:

- uses one or more well developed paragraphs: these are unified, coherent, concise, and able to stand alone.
- uses an introduction/body/conclusion structure which presents the article, paper, or report's purpose, method, results, and conclusions, (and, possibly, recommendations) in that order.
- follows strictly the chronology of the article, paper, or report.
- provides logical connections (or transitions) between the information included. . adds **no** new information.
- **doesn't** rely on the way material was phrased in the article, paper, or report but
 - summarizes information in a new way.
- is understandable to a wide audience.

An abstract should include the few things you would like your reader to remember long after the details of your paper may be forgotten.

Sample Assignment Sequence: Research Essay on Film (from Alison Better)

For your final course project, you will take your accumulated knowledge and formulate your own research question and plan for study. Using the film *Paris is Burning* (1990) to begin our inquiry, you will each determine a research question to guide your exploration of constructions of gender and/or sexuality categories and performance. This question will guide you as you conduct library research seeking out sources to help make your argument. Your 10-12 page paper will examine your chosen aspect of gender and/or sexuality.

In conducting your research, you will be required to find your own sources and data to support and to argue your thesis. You are required to use at least three of the readings from this course in your paper, as well as at least five outside sources. Outside sources **must be scholarly** (This includes books and peer-reviewed journal articles. Magazines, newspapers, wikipedia, textbooks, and encyclopedias are not scholarly sources). Sources must be actively engaged with in the text of the research paper.

Pre-Draft Assignment 3.1 *Research Proposal* Due November 8

The proposal is your first step in your research paper writing. Its function is to provide space to begin brainstorming and narrowing down your research topic, generate ideas relating to the research topic and the texts read in class, and formulate questions you may wish to consider when writing your paper.

The proposal is also an excellent medium for you to consider what main ideas you are going to have in order for you to begin writing your paper. It is also important for you to start considering what frame you will be placing around your topic. Another way to say it: consider what ideas you will use to discuss your topic. Instead of an outline, which assumes that you already have some idea of the structure of your paper, this assignment discusses what your paper might be about. As a result, you should see the proposal as an exploration of your topic, your ideas on the topic, your reasons for choosing the topic, and what you will need to do in order to complete your essay. You will find that creating a research question is helpful because in-depth questions by definition demand explorative answers. Within those answers, you may find your topic narrowing itself, or you may find a new topic that is more interesting to you.

You may approach your proposal any way you feel, but please make sure you address at the very least the following: Indicate your topic, problem, or idea you will be exploring.

- * Why does this topic interest you personally?
(choose something you care about—it is no fun spending weeks writing something you aren't interested in)
- * What questions do you want to address in your paper?
- * How do those questions or ideas intersect with what we have been discussing in class?
- * How focused is your topic?
- * Do you have any ideas on how your paper will be structured?
- * If you have a preliminary position in relation to your topic and research question, indicate what that position is.

Assignment Sequence: Research Essay on Film (cont.)

Pre-Draft Assignment 3.2

Annotated Bibliography

Due November 13

A bibliography lists in alphabetical order the texts writers have read or cited during their research. An annotated bibliography follows each bibliographic entry with a brief evaluative summary called an annotation. The annotation describes the topic of the text, the author's purpose in writing it, and the intended audience, whether scholarly or non-scholarly. It also evaluates the usefulness and reliability of the text, and describes the scope of the author's point of view, objective, assumptions, and political agenda. Annotated bibliographies record citation information for the sources consulted so that plagiarism may be avoided, and provide a basis for deciding whether or not the text will be useful for the project.

For the annotated bibliography, you need **five** sources from your research including at least one scholarly book and one scholarly article. Scholarly sources usually include a bibliography, citations, and footnotes, and are often published by university presses, and refer to other scholarly sources. The texts we have read in class should not appear on this annotated bibliography.

You should use the following format:

1. General introduction: A paragraph explaining your research topic
2. Five annotated entries, in alphabetical order by the author's last name, with citation information in APA style. Each entry should be followed by an annotation in paragraph form that gives the following information:
 - * What kind of source this is (book or article, scholarly or popular, print or electronic)
 - * The specific subject the author is writing about
 - * What the author seeks to discover, prove, or challenge
 - * The broad debates the author engages in, and how other sources are used to further the analysis
 - * How the source will contribute to your research

Pre-Draft Assignment 3.3

Reverse Outline

Due November 29

A reverse outline is a technique we can use to see our papers in a different light. Take your draft and begin to write an outline of what you have already written. Use the central claims of each paragraph as points in your outline.

Assignment Sequence: Research Essay on Film (cont.)

Pre-Draft Assignment 3.2

Annotated Bibliography

Due November 13

A bibliography lists in alphabetical order the texts writers have read or cited during their research. An annotated bibliography follows each bibliographic entry with a brief evaluative summary called an annotation. The annotation describes the topic of the text, the author's purpose in writing it, and the intended audience, whether scholarly or non-scholarly. It also evaluates the usefulness and reliability of the text, and describes the scope of the author's point of view, objective, assumptions, and political agenda. Annotated bibliographies record citation information for the sources consulted so that plagiarism may be avoided, and provide a basis for deciding whether or not the text will be useful for the project.

For the annotated bibliography, you need **five** sources from your research including at least one scholarly book and one scholarly article. Scholarly sources usually include a bibliography, citations, and footnotes, and are often published by university presses, and refer to other scholarly sources. The texts we have read in class should not appear on this annotated bibliography.

You should use the following format:

1. General introduction: A paragraph explaining your research topic
2. Five annotated entries, in alphabetical order by the author's last name, with citation information in APA style. Each entry should be followed by an annotation in paragraph form that gives the following information:
 - * What kind of source this is (book or article, scholarly or popular, print or electronic)
 - * The specific subject the author is writing about
 - * What the author seeks to discover, prove, or challenge
 - * The broad debates the author engages in, and how other sources are used to further the analysis
 - * How the source will contribute to your research

Pre-Draft Assignment 3.3

Reverse Outline

Due November 29

A reverse outline is a technique we can use to see our papers in a different light. Take your draft and begin to write an outline of what you have already written. Use the central claims of each paragraph as points in your outline.

Assignment Sequence: Research Essay on Film (cont.)

Rough Draft and Cover Letter

Due November 20

In your cover letter, please address the following questions:

- * What do you see as the main point or idea of your research essay?
- * What are the biggest problems you are having at this stage of the writing process?
- * Which idea or point do you think you've made most successfully?
- * Which have you made least successfully?
- * What's your number one question about your essay—its thesis, structure, use of evidence, persuasiveness, style, and so on—that you would like your reader(s) to answer for you?

Presentations

November 29 and December 4

Each of you will give a 3-5 minute presentation in class about your research project. These will be followed by time for questions from your peers. Guidelines for presentations will be discussed in class.

Final Draft and Cover Letter

Due December 4

In your cover letter, please address the following questions:

- * What is your thesis? How has it changed from draft to revision?
- * What are you most pleased about in this revision?
- * What was the most challenging moment in your drafting and revision process?

Course Portfolio and Cover Letter

Due December 6

Sample Assignment Sequence: Researched Argument (from Rebecca Olson)

Source Texts: Eric Schlosser’s *Fast Food Nation*; articles, books, websites, and other texts from your own research (at least four cited in the paper, three of which must be print sources – see below).

Assignment Objectives: To become familiar with and proficient at using library research tools and materials; to engage in a larger public debate from a perspective informed by scholarly research; to continue to develop skills in close reading, applying a lens text, structuring evidence and analysis, and motivating thesis.

Key Elements of the Academic Essay: Thesis, Motive, Evidence, Analysis, Structure, Sources; Reflecting; Orienting; Stance

Final Length: 10-12 pages

Assignment Deadlines:

Pre-draft 3.1 (research question):	Wednesday, Oct. 31
Pre-draft 3.2 (research proposal):	Wednesday, Nov. 7
Pre-draft 3.3 (annotated bibliography):	Monday, Nov. 12
Pre-draft 3.4 (outline):	Wednesday, Nov. 14
First draft + draft cover letter:	Wednesday, Nov. 21
In-class workshop:	Monday, Nov. 26
Brief presentation:	Wednesday, Nov. 28
Revised draft + cover letter + checklist	Wednesday, Dec. 5

Extension Opportunity: Review a current (2007) article, book, or film that deals with any aspect of fast food. In your review (2 pages), you should summarize the main argument, describe author’s methodology (how the evidence was accumulated, and how it was analyzed), and discuss its major strengths and weaknesses. Finally, does this source have the potential to change any of the problems it identifies? Why or why not?

Assignment Description:

In this final essay, you will enter the fast food debate from a perspective that reflects your own interests and concerns. Choose one issue presented in *Fast Food Nation* from the list below and present an argument about that issue informed by scholarly research (if you choose your own fast-food related issue, be sure that I’ve checked off on it by November 1). This is not a “research paper” in the sense that you are expected to read several sources about an issue and summarize them, but rather an opportunity for you to explore your own question until you have a convincing, balanced, and well-researched argument.

This assignment requires you to become familiar with the Brandeis library and its online research tools—we will complete an online tutorial and have the opportunity to work as a class with a Brandeis librarian. Some of the university’s resources might be familiar to you; many will be new: it is essential, for your future academic career, that you learn how to use the library and feel comfortable conducting research at the college level

Research Issues (Starting points for your own research question):

Fast Food in Schools Many public schools in this country sell fast food products to children, in return for monetary rewards that go toward educational programs. How do such arrangements help children, and how might they hurt them? Alternately, is eating fast food a consumer “choice” when it is promoted within public institutions?

Worker Rights According to Schlosser, it is in the big fast food corporations’ best interest to maintain high employee turnover and to block any attempts to unionize: this has led to poor working conditions in the industry, especially for teenagers. Is there a solution to this problem? What is the number one thing a fast food corporation could do to protect employees and, at the same time, keep making money?

Agriculture Schlosser praises In-N-Out Burger for using fresh potatoes and beef. Why have the larger companies turned to frozen, dehydrated, and chemically frozen foods, and is it feasible for a company as large as McDonalds to follow the In-N-Out model? How has fast food impacted our nation’s agriculture, and ultimately all of our meals (i.e., those eaten at home)?

Meatpacking Schlosser implies that corporate tax breaks and close political ties with government have allowed meatpacking plants to abuse workers and work around or even break laws. Has anything been done since the publication of *Fast Food Nation* to improve conditions in these plants? In other words, has public awareness increased and, consequently, spurred action? Alternately, what might happen to the meatpacking industry if current immigration laws are passed?

Obesity Fast food companies have been targeted as a major reason why obesity in America is at an all-time high, especially among children. This a significant problem for the nation: as Schloseer points out, “The annual cost of obesity alone is now twice as large as the fast food industry’s total revenues” (261). What needs to happen to promote healthier eating habits in this country, and to what extent should the fast food companies be expected to participate?

In this essay, you should:

- Develop a thesis from the starting point of a research question. This question should directly pertain to one of the above issues from *Fast Food Nation*.

I ask you to begin with a research question because your ultimate argument should be informed by your research; the most boring way to write a research paper is to begin with an argument and then run around trying to find people who agree with you. The object here is to participate in a larger conversation; you need to know what that conversation is, and who the key players are. Many of your future assignments at Brandeis will be very open-ended: learning how to craft an effective research question will help prepare you for these independent assignments. Your question should narrow one of the above research issues. If your question is unrelated to the above issues, I need to sign off on it before November 1.

- Find appropriate, authoritative evidence from well-respected sources.

For this assignment, you are required to prepare an annotated bibliography of at least six sources; at least four of these (including Fast Food Nation) will be cited in the paper itself. Three of the final paper's quoted sources (including Fast Food Nation) should be print sources: a print source is a book, article, essay, or advertisement that originally appeared in print (this means that peer-reviewed scholarly journal articles accessed through a library database such as Academic Search Premier count as print sources).

- Continue skills from essay #1 and #2.

A research argument calls for many of the same skills as the lens essay: you will use one text (research source) to consider another; you will incorporate quotations effectively; you will close read passages from your texts. Although this is a "research paper," the essay should be organized and structured like any other paper; you should have a central argument, supported by evidence (your research).

- Pace yourself

Writing a researched argument is a process; a successful essay builds on a series of smaller steps. This is true of any effective essay, of course, but a research paper also has additional challenges, many of which require advance planning (such as ordering research materials through interlibrary loan). We will have four pre-draft assignments; these are designed to keep you on task and to help you along the way. The research essay can seem daunting; working on it a little each day, rather than all at once, will help you from becoming overwhelmed and dispirited.

- Focus on the relationship between you and your audience

On a paper of this length, structure is important, and so are transitions and other "stitching" techniques. You should also pay close attention to orienting the reader and reflecting (anticipating objections). Keep in mind that you are participating in a conversation—you might think of your audience as readers very much like your classmates: people who are relatively informed on the overall topic of fast food, but not as expert as you in a particular issue within that larger topic.

UWS 23A

Essay #3: The Researched Argument

Pre-draft 3.1: Research Question

Two paragraphs

Due: Wednesday, October 31 in class

In one paragraph, explain what aspect of *Fast Food Nation* you found most interesting or problematic: what did you learn from this chapter? What about it made you think of the subject of fast food differently? Why do you think it is a good issue to explore more deeply? Then, in a new paragraph, list at least three potential research questions (for example, “Would unionizing really hurt McDonald’s?” or “What would happen if the fast food industry used organic potatoes?”). Print your paragraph, read over what you’ve written, and highlight or underline the question you plan on going with. Be prepared to tell us in class why you chose the question you did.

Pre-draft 3.2: Research Proposal

1-2 pages

Due: Wednesday, November 7 in class

The research proposal is basically a more formal, detailed version of pre-draft #1. By this point, you’ll have done some research and might have tweaked your research question (or changed courses slightly). In one to two pages, outline your basic plan for the paper, being sure to address the following questions:

- Indicate your topic: what issue presented in *Fast Food Nation*?
- What is the problem/question orienting your research?
- Why is it important? Why is it important to you?
- Do you think this question is appropriate in scope? Can you answer it satisfactorily in ten to twelve pages?
- What kind of research have you found so far? What do you plan on exploring next?
- Do you have an idea of what your argument might be? In other words, are you already leaning toward an answer to your question? What might influence you one way or the other?

Pre-draft 3.3: Annotated bibliography

Due: Monday, Nov. 12, 5PM (my mailbox)

Your annotated bibliography should list six potential sources for your paper, in proper MLA format. Beneath each entry, write a paragraph that summarizes the source's main argument (or portion of the argument most useful to you) and how they could be helpful to your research question: the proposal will look something like an expanded Works Cited page. Feel free to include direct quotations in your paragraphs, especially ones that you know you want to use in the paper. Be sure to write your research question at the top of the first page.

Sources: You must list six sources, one of which will be Eric Schlosser's *Fast Food Nation*. Three of your sources must be print sources (see assignment sheet for details). MLA citations must follow the guidelines in Hacker or the bibliography will not be accepted; see pages 370-407.

Sample Entry:

Research question: Is it immoral to eat beef?

Lappé, Francis Moore. Diet for a Small Planet. 2nd ed. New York: Ballantine, 1991.

This book was originally published as a pamphlet in the 70s—Lappé was researching the causes of world hunger and global food supply when her data led her discover that, in fact, the world made more than enough food to feed everyone. The problem was how that food—grains, nuts, etc.—was being used; much of it was being used ineffectively, and the people suffering were the poor and underrepresented. This book was groundbreaking in the way that it revealed the significance of food choices and the potential consequences of the American meat-based diet. *Diet for a Small Planet* has been one of the most influential pro-vegetarian arguments in American history. I plan on using the passage that describes the inefficiency of beef consumption: “For every 16 pounds of grain and soy fed to beef cattle in the United State,” Lappé writes, “we only get 1 pound back in meat on our plates.” The other fifteen pounds, she explains, are inaccessible as food sources (69).

Pre-draft 3.4: Outline

1-2 pages, **2 copies**

Due: Wednesday, November 14 in class

You may have learned an outline method in high school, something with Roman numerals or lower-cased letters, or perhaps you tend to draw maps or flow charts of your ideas. Whatever your method is, bring in a one-page “road map”, so to speak: a list or outline that helps you to visualize the final paper. Make sure that your outline makes it clear what your thesis is, your key sources, and the general order and structure of your argument. A truly excellent outline would break the essay down into smaller arguments – what is the main argument of each paragraph? This should be a document that both reflects what you've already done and looks ahead to strengthening the draft. You will workshop this outline with a partner in class, so if it's handwritten, make sure someone else can read it!

UWS 23A

First Draft Cover Letter

1 page, single spaced

Due: Wednesday, November 21 in class

What you need to bring to class: **4 copies** of the cover letter, **three copies** of your introduction and conclusion for workshop members, **one copy** of the entire first draft for me.

In your letter, please address the following questions:

- What was your research question?
- What is your thesis?
- What is your motive?
- Did your thesis change over the course of writing the essay?
- Give a brief overview of your evidence and how it supports your thesis
- Are you happy with your conclusion? Do you have any ideas about how to make it stronger?

Revised Draft Cover Letter

1 page, single spaced

Due: Wednesday, Dec. 5

Please address the following questions:

- What is your thesis?
- What would you say is different about a researched argument than a lens paper?
- What was the biggest challenge of this paper?
- What will you do differently the next time you write a researched argument?
- What are you happiest about with this paper?
- How might your paper contribute to the larger Fast Food Debate?
- Who were the main authorities you quoted, and what did they teach you?

Sample Assignment Sequence: Research Essay with Optional Case (from Bendta Schroeder)

All semester, we've explored the dynamics of desire in film and novels--how these narratives create and shape desire, and how people co-opt these cultural objects for their own uses. Now that you've had some practice in both close reading and in applying a theory to a text, this assignment invites you to apply those skills to a cultural object "out there" in the world.

Your task is to make an argument about the construction or uses of desire in your choice of cultural object, using at least one of the theoretical readings for the semester (Foucault or Radway) to frame your argument, and six outside sources. If you would like to use a different theoretical frame, it must be approved by me first.

Here are some objects of analysis to consider (but please don't limit yourself just to these):

Print

Novels
Graphic Novels/Comics/Manga
Self-help Books
Magazines

Internet

Fan Fiction
Dating Websites
Blogs

Visual

Movies/Films
Theatre
Television Shows
Advertisements
Photography
Art
Music Videos
Book Covers/CD Art
Public Events/Spaces

Your paper should be 8-10 pages long and formatted according to MLA guidelines.

Rough Draft: 7 pages minimum, Tuesday, November 27

Final Draft: Tuesday, December 4

-Please attach your peer review letters and a cover letter explaining the goals of your paper and how you have used the writing and revision process to obtain that goal.

Goals

∞ **Formulate a nuanced, cohesive thesis that makes a claim both meaningful and contestable.** Please don't mistake this research paper for a book report or a laundry list of what other people say about a given topic—such a paper will not receive a pleasing grade. Do, however, make an argument that is complex and sustained throughout the entire paper.

∞ **Support your thesis with relevant, reliable sources.** Don't give up on finding sources too easily. Be creative. Seek professional help (our resource librarians are exceptional).

∞ **Structure your argument in a way that makes sense and helps you make your case.** Make sure each successive point builds on the last and that the reader can follow the

progression of your argument from point to point. A successful argument incorporates a variety of different points into the framework of a larger claim, without merely listing them or piling on points that aren't necessarily connected to one another.

∞ **Consider your reader.** In academia, your “reader” is never quite your instructor. Though I aim for being good natured and skeptical like this pretend “reader” is supposed to be, the reader you must write for has a general knowledge of the text but lacks specifics. Remember to always relate your specific arguments about details back to the thesis, and never assume your reader will see the text the same way you do or s/he will draw the same conclusions.

∞ **Use consistent and appropriate citation.** Because you will be working with at least eight different “texts” of various types, you will have to be scrupulous about citing your sources. You will cite the theoretical text and the film according to MLA guidelines.

∞ **Have style.** Research papers are often stylistically boring. Without losing your academic tone and diction, be creative with your language choices to retain your audience's attention.



Assignment 3.1: Research Proposal

The proposal is your first step in your research paper writing. It's intended to provide space to begin brainstorming and narrowing down your research topic, generate ideas relating to the research topic and class readings, and formulate questions you might want to consider when writing your paper.

Besides generating a subject of research, the proposal also encourages you to consider how you will be framing that subject: in addition to choosing your theoretical frame, you will also have to decide what kinds of questions you will be asking about your subject and what kind of research materials you will be gathering and analyzing to answer those questions. At this point, you are not expected to have an answer to your research question—having answers so early may mean that your question may be too easily answered or that it may not prove a very interesting topic for you to explore or for your audience to read about. Neither are you expected to be committed to the exact research question you produce here. While it's an extremely bad idea to jump from topic to unrelated topic, given our time constraints, it's very likely you will find your question evolving as you think more about your topic and research it. What you are expected to do is to form a creative and focused research question, potentially answerable in a research paper of 8-10 pages, along with a strategy for answering that question.

You may structure your research proposal in any way you like, but you must do so in a clear and organized fashion, and address the following concerns:

- (1) What is your paper topic and why does it interest you personally and/or intellectually?
- (2) What questions do you want to address in your paper?
- (3) What theoretical frame will be you be using and how will it help you answer your questions?
- (4) What do you need to know to answer your question? What kinds of sources will help you?
- (5) What preliminary ideas do you have for structuring your paper?
- (6) If you have a tentative position in relation to your topic, explain what it is and why you think so.

Due Tuesday, November 13



Assignment 3.2: Annotated Bibliography

An annotated bibliography (AB) lists in alphabetical order the texts that a writer has read or cited during her or his research. A brief evaluative summary (called an annotation) follows each bibliographic entry. The annotation describes the topic of the text, the author's purpose in writing it, and the intended audience, whether scholarly or non-scholarly; it evaluates the usefulness and reliability of the text, and describes the scope of the author's point of view, objective, assumptions, and political agenda. ABs record citation information for the sources consulted that plagiarism may be avoided, and provide a basis for deciding whether or not the text will be useful for the project.

For the AB, you need 5 sources from your research, including at least one of each of the following: a scholarly book, a scholarly article, and a reliable Internet source. The texts we read in class should not appear in the AB. Textbooks and encyclopedias are not acceptable research sources and thus should not appear on the AB. (Sorry—that means no Wikipedia.)

Please use the following format:

- (1) A general introduction of about one paragraph in length explaining your research topic.
- (2) Five annotated entries in alphabetical order by the author's last name. Entries should be in MLA style and be followed by a call number. Each entry should be followed by an annotation in paragraph form that gives the following information:
 - ❧ Type of source (book or article; scholarly or popular; print or online)
 - ❧ The specific subject the author writes about
 - ❧ What the author seeks to discover, prove, or challenge
 - ❧ The broad debates the author engages in, and how he uses sources
 - ❧ How the source will contribute to your research

Due Tuesday, November 20

Sample Assignment Sequence: Research Essay on Public Policy (from Jessie Stickgold-Sarah)

Pre-draft 3.1

Due Wednesday, October 31st. Two pages.

For our first two assignments you wrote about pre-selected texts. In this essay you will begin by collecting your own set of texts. Select your topic from the list of options given in the research paper assignment and begin to educate yourself on the debate.

- Stem cell research
- The Human Genome Project
- Reproductive genetic testing / genetic counseling
- Cloning
- Forensic DNA testing

Use newspapers, magazines, scholarly journals, online sources, books, etc. Be careful to distinguish between reliable and non-reliable sources. Because your paper will need to review the entire scope of the debate you will be reading and using sources that are biased, misleading, or factually incorrect, so be sure to read with a critical eye. After doing this research you should be able to answer the following questions (or begin to):

- What is the legal, moral, ethical, political, scientific or policy question?
- What is the science or technology involved?
- Who are the major participants?
- What other legal, moral, ethical, political, scientific or policy debates are implicated in or dependent on this debate?
- What is the current legal/political/scientific status of this debate?
- Do they frame the debate differently? For example, “Stem cell research will help cure disease” vs. “An embryo is a human life.”
- How do you assess the credibility of the participants in the debate?

Your second pre-draft assignment and your paper will, of course, begin to analyze the language and images used in this debate, but for this introductory assignment you only need to become conversant with it.

What to turn in: two full pages, double-spaced, explaining your chosen topic and answering the questions above.

Pre-draft 3.2

Due Wednesday, November 7th. Two pages.

In this pre-draft assignment you will begin to analyse the data/texts you collected in exercise 3.1. In your close-reading and lens essays you developed techniques for identifying and analysing the images of genetics and the function those images serve. You have thought about natural selection as a metaphor for individual human success and failure; you have considered the meaning of genetic manipulation and thought about what makes a person fully human, and how that can be shown in fiction; you have discussed the ethics of prenatal testing, of eliminating genetic conditions or diseases. We will review this material in class, and in this exercise you will use those same techniques to analyse the texts you have collected.

This assignment should begin to draw conclusions about the *use of genetics* in this debate. It is not a purely ethical assessment, nor is it a scientific evaluation. For instance, you might conclude that the terms of the debate over stem cell research is controlled by the moral and legal status of abortion in the US; or that contemporary genetic counseling is or is not *formally* allied with (or even similar to) earlier eugenic projects. Your analysis should not consist of a judgment on whether a particular project is right or wrong, but may describe the grounds on which such a judgment could be made.

Annotated bibliography

Due November 5th in class.

What is an annotated bibliography?

An annotated bibliography is a list of sources supported by a brief summary of the content and relevance of each source. For this assignment you will find ten sources related to your choice of public policy debate (see research assignment). These sources can be books, journals, scholarly online publications, news sources, etc. Be sure to distinguish carefully between different kinds of online sources. Journals and sites run by major reputable institutions (universities, branches of government, major media outlets) are different from personal webpages and you must treat them differently in your research.

At least four of your ten sources must be secondary sources. We will discuss the definition of primary versus secondary sources in class. **You must include at least one book, one journal article, and one authoritative online source** in your annotated bibliography.

When assembling your bibliography, select sources that question or work against your understanding of the situation, as well as sources that inform you about the official debate. What questions do you have about your subject? What can you guess about the standpoint of the various players in the conflict, and do you agree with one, several, or none of those

perspectives? Consider counter-arguments and think about what information might allow you to make an informed decision.

For your annotation, it is not necessary to read the entire text. This assignment is meant to give you practice in finding sources and examining them to get a sense of their range, context, argument, points of view, etc. Each annotation should be 3-5 sentences long.

You should use the following format:

1. General introduction. A paragraph explaining your research topic.
2. Ten annotated entries, in alphabetical order by the author's last name, bibliographic information in MLA style, and call number. Each entry should be followed by an annotation in paragraph form that gives the following information:
 - what kind of source it is: book or article, scholarly or popular, print or electronic;
 - the specific subject the author is writing about;
 - what the author seeks to discover, prove, or challenge;
 - the broad debates the author engages in, and how he uses other sources, and
 - how the source will contribute to your research.

Essay #3: Independent research

Draft due Monday, November 12th; final essay due Wednesday, November 21st. 10-11 pages.

This paper will focus on the process and use of independent research. In this unit we will read excerpts from a set of public debates over genetics. You will choose one of these excerpts, develop a research question regarding the role and use of genetics in that debate, and use that independent research to draw your own conclusions. Your choices are:

- Stem cell research
- The Human Genome Project
- Reproductive genetic testing / genetic counseling
- Cloning
- Forensic DNA testing

Your task is two-fold. For your base of materials you will gather a set of texts representing the public debate on your topic. Gather a wide variety of sources on both (or all) sides of the

function of genetics in the discussion? Is it the focus of the debate or is it used to make an argument about some other issue? Does it serve as an authority, as a threat, as a mechanism to reconcile or prioritize other aspects of the debate? Whose viewpoint is used as the default? Etc. Use techniques of close reading to develop and support your answers.

In addition to developing your research skills, this essay will also require you to manage a number of different texts. In your first paper, you began with one text and then developed an argument about it; in your second paper you used a pre-assigned lens as an additional text. In this final paper, you will find your own texts and use the same techniques to incorporate them into your essay.

A few tips on defining the focus of your research:

1. Begin with a question, not just a topic. In general, all of our handouts on picking a good thesis will also apply to picking a good research question: not just *what* happened but *why* and *how*, for instance.
2. Be specific. Find something small enough that you can learn a lot about it and then relate it to your text in the time and space allowed.
3. Expect to go to the library more than once. A good research paper will involve basic research to understand the area of information, some thought to develop a question which your paper will answer, and then additional research to answer that question. It's an iterative process, with each round of research helping you understand what more you need to know.

Remember that the information gathered in your research is only the beginning. In addition to the task of developing and explicating your original thesis, you will work on citation, quotation, knowing how to avoid plagiarism, integrating evidence smoothly and structuring your argument.

Sample Assignment Sequence: Text in Context Research Essay (from Lauren Holm)

Assignment: For this 10-page essay, we will examine Arthur Conan Doyle's *Hound of the Baskervilles*. You will conduct research to locate 3 or more sources (at least 1 primary and 2 secondary sources) that illuminate the context of Doyle's novel. The context can be defined in several ways. You can devise your own context or choose one from the possible contexts I will provide. Drawing on skills from the previous essays, you will do a close reading of *Hound of the Baskervilles* through the lens of the context you have chosen.

Formatting: The essay should be 10 pages long, double-spaced, 1-inch margins all around, in 12 point Times New Roman font. It should include a title and page numbers. Follow the detailed formatting instructions on page 445 of *Rules for Writers*. We will cover MLA documentation style in class. You must provide in-text citations and a works cited page following these guidelines. Please note: if you do not provide proper citation, your paper will be returned to you and will not be graded until you return it with corrections. If you do not reach the minimum page requirement or minimum requirement for sources, or if your sources are not legitimate scholarly works, your essay will not pass and you will be asked to re-write it and your final grade will be affected. If you have questions about the legitimacy of your sources or about citation and plagiarism, you should always feel free to ask me.

Research Log: As you conduct research for this essay, you need to keep a research log either in your notebook or on the computer. Each time you search for material for this paper—*whether or not your search is successful*—record the place you searched and the terms you searched with. This prevents you from repeating searches you've already done and makes it easier for me to help you locate sources. Keep a list of all titles that you find that might be related to your context. You might also use the research log as a place for keeping notes on the texts that you find. Taking notes as you go can save you a lot of time later on. A copy of your research log must be turned in with your essay. Also, you must turn in a photocopy of any sources you cite with your final draft. If your source is a book, please photocopy or scan the chapter or relevant passages.

Contexts: There are two basic approaches to choose from and several possibilities within each approach.

1. Thematic approach: choose an aspect of *Hound of the Baskervilles* that you would like to explore further. Some possibilities:

- **Late Victorian Science**

Hound of the Baskervilles makes reference to anthropology, phrenology, forensics, etc. By researching one of these areas, you might place *Hound of the Baskerville* within larger debates of the period on science, human development, medicine. Primary sources might include scientific reports or articles from the time period. Secondary sources might be about late Victorian science, science and detective fiction, science and the novel. The Science Library owns *Encyclopedia of Forensic Science : a compendium of*

Forensic Science : a compendium of detective fact and fiction (Call number: Science Library - Reference: HV8073 .C595 2002) which might be a useful reference work.

- **Late Victorian Supernaturalism**

Hound of the Baskervilles raises the question of whether supernatural forces are responsible for Sir Charles' death or whether there is a logical, material explanation for events. By researching turn-of-the-century views of supernaturalism, you will be able to understand contemporary views and fears that the novel is responding to or drawing on. Again, primary sources might be nineteenth-century accounts or critiques of supernaturalism or another story that invokes the supernatural.

- **Gender**

We have been thinking already about the gender of the detective in Victorian fiction. There has already been scholarly work on masculinity in Sherlock Holmes that you may be interested in. This novel also offers a bizarre view of marriage (the Stapletons) and a rare view of divorce (Mrs. Laura Lyons). A greater understanding of attitudes toward and laws regarding marriage and divorce could provide insights into the text. Primary documents might include legal or periodical writings on marriage, divorce or gender roles.

2. Historical approach: choose a historical perspective to use as a lens for thinking about *Hound of the Baskervilles*.

- **Contemporary**

Hound of the Baskervilles is set in the late 1890s and was written and published in 1901-02. You could look at either the political or literary context of the year the text was published. Understanding the historical or historico-literary context will allow you to discuss how *Hound of the Baskervilles* can be seen as a product of its historical moment. For information on the literary context, the library owns a book called *Annals of English Literature* (Call number: Z2011.A5) which lists important publications and historical events by year. For primary documents, the library owns a reference book called *Writings on British history, 1934-1945; a bibliography of books and articles on the history of Great Britain from about 450 A.D. to 1914* (Call number: Reference: Z2016 .R85).

- **Past**

Many people think of Sherlock Holmes as the first detective in fiction. Over the course of the semester, we have seen that although he may be the most important and well-known detective, he is not the first. Scholars today are starting to think of Holmes as the culmination of the work of earlier Victorian writers. You might use the pre-history to Sherlock Holmes to provide insight into how Sir Arthur Conan Doyle either built on a preexisting foundation or totally reinvented the genre in his Holmes stories and novels.

- **Future**

Sherlock Holmes novels have been subject to multiple adaptations since their first appearance at the turn of the twentieth century. You can use one of these adaptations (like the 1939 version we watched in class) to inform your reading of *Hound of the Baskervilles*. Primary texts could be filmic or narrative adaptations of *Hound of the Baskervilles*. Secondary texts might be from the fields of film studies or adaptation theory. On reserve for this class is a book called *The Alternative Sherlock Holmes : Pastiches, Parodies, and Copies* which provides a bibliography of adaptations.

These are only a few suggestions for how to approach this essay. If you would like to create your own context, please feel free, but do run your context by me before beginning your research.

PRE-DRAFT EXERCISE 3.1: PARAPHRASE/SUMMARIZE/PLAGIARIZE/ANALYZE

Choose a short passage from one of your sources to paraphrase, summarize, plagiarize, and analyze. Remember that a paraphrase records all the important details of a passage and a summary condenses a passage to the main ideas. Excerpt your passage at the top of the page.

1. In your own words, write the best **paraphrase** you can of your passage. Write a citation for your paraphrase.
2. In your own words, write the best **summary** you can of your passage. Write a citation for your summary.
3. Purposely write a *poor* **paraphrase** or **summary (a plagiarism)** of your passage, and make a short list of the characteristics that make it poor.
4. Finally, write a page **analyzing** the passage you've chosen. This should include attention to both the language and ideas of the passage. You should also include a brief statement of how this passage fits with your larger project as you conceive of it at this point.

Due Wednesday 3/28

PRE-DRAFT EXERCISE 3.2 ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

A bibliography lists in alphabetical order the texts that a writer has read or cited during his research. An annotated bibliography follows each bibliographic entry with a brief evaluative summary called an annotation. The annotation describes the topic of the text, the author's purpose in writing it, and the intended audience, whether scholarly or non-scholarly; it evaluates the usefulness and reliability of the text, and describes the scope of the author's point of view, objective, assumptions, and political agenda. Annotated bibliographies record citation information for the sources consulted so that plagiarism may be avoided, and provide a basis for deciding whether or not the text will be useful for the project.

For the Annotated Bibliography, you need FIVE sources from your research, including 1) a scholarly book, 2) a scholarly article, and 3) an Internet source. Scholarly sources usually include a bibliography, citations, and footnotes, are often published by university presses, and refer to other scholarly sources. The texts we read in class should not appear on the AB. Since textbooks and encyclopedias are not acceptable research sources, they should not be included on the AB.

You should use the following format:

I. General introduction. A paragraph explaining your research topic.

II. Five annotated entries, in alphabetical order by the author's last name, bibliographic information in MLA style, and call number. Each entry should be followed by an annotation in paragraph form that gives the following information:

- 1) what kind of source it is: book or article, scholarly or popular, print or electronic,
- 2) the specific subject the author is writing about,
- 3) what the author seeks to discover, prove, or challenge,
- 4) the broad debates the author engages in, and how he uses other sources, and
- 5) how the source will contribute to your research.

Due Wednesday, 4/11 in class

Sample Research Assignment: Anthropological Approach (from Keridwen Luis)

Choose a piece of children's literature or an aspect of anthropological or psychological research on childhood, and perform an analysis of some aspect of how childhood is constructed, disciplined, constrained, performed, or culturally created. You may use some of the class texts as jumping-off points, but library research will be required to gather outside sources to support and clarify your argument. You may also choose to analyze one of the examples of children's literature presented in class, but there are so many other interesting texts that I encourage you to look elsewhere for your research topic.

Some possible research topics include: looking at a particular theme in children's literature or selected children's literature; examining anthropological or sociological research on children (while I encourage you to do cross-cultural studies, do not attempt to cover the entire world in your paper -- compare two cultures, three at most, or delve into a single culture); researching how children stand in the eyes of the law (there are interesting implications here as to whether children are belongings or people); questioning how childhood is presented in adult literature (memoir or fiction); and so on. Themes we have examined in this class include discipline, personhood, class, race, prejudice, family relationships, education and the state, child abuse, agency, premature adulthood, and others. However, there are many other interesting themes to explore, should you wish to!

Should you decide that you wish to research a work of children's literature, I strongly suggest that you research a well-known piece (*Little Women*, *Harry Potter* -- or, not from our class, *Peter Pan*, *Chronicles of Narnia*, *Chronicles of Earthsea*, *Alice in Wonderland*) as these are most likely to have literary criticism (scholarly works for you to mine) published about them.

Research papers differ from traditional essays not only in length and scope, but also in how they are constructed: while the writer (usually) has a strong thesis in mind before even beginning a short essay, this is not always the case with research papers. It is often difficult to know what will be discovered by research; the thesis is sometimes constructed at some point during the research itself, and not during the conception of the paper. However, bear in mind that a strong thesis is, as ever, very important!

A research paper is not a report on the material covered. You **must** construct a hypothesis, analyze the evidence, and present the material in the form of arguments and explorations that lead to a conclusion that proves or disproves (or at least fails to prove!) the hypothesis. **Do not present the reader with a list of facts.**

This paper will be **10-12 pages long**, exclusive of the Works Cited section.

Each paper must refer to at least **five (5) scholarly sources beyond the primary texts**. (For example, if you chose to do a research paper on *Peter Pan*, you would reference at least five relevant scholarly articles on *Peter Pan* or children's literature in general, or perhaps on

children's psych, or the anthropology of children's legends.) You may use non-scholarly sources if you have good reasons for doing so, but they are not substitutes for good scholarly sources.

Please note that this essay should use MLA citation and MLA paper headers. Your name, my name, the name of the class and the date should all appear in a right-justified block on the first page. Your last name and the page number should appear in a header or footer on every page after that. Citations are in the (Lastname pagenumber) format -- no colon, no comma. Details are available in *A Writer's Reference* under MLA (pp. 355-412; see 408-12 for sample paper).

As ever, the paper must adhere to **appropriate formatting and citation**. The formatting protocols for the class are set out in the syllabus, but I will reprise them briefly here for your convenience:

- All papers must be typed or word-processed *and printed out*. No email submissions will be accepted.

- Three (3) copies of each rough draft must be brought to class for peer review.

- Your full name must appear on the first page of the paper and your last name in a header or footer in subsequent pages.

- All papers must be spell checked; they must have page numbers; they must use in-text citation; they must have a correctly formatted Works Cited page; they must have a title; they must be written in 12-point font and have margins of one inch; they must be double-spaced; **and all of these things are required for every draft**. (Please refer to the handouts on citation and essay style)

- Every paper must have a *cover letter*. (Please refer to the handout on cover letters)

- A peer review letter must be provided for every paper you review during the peer review cycle.

- Written work submitted later than fifteen minutes after the beginning of class on the due date will be counted as a day late. Late papers are lowered by a third of a grade for each day late (i.e. a B+ paper will be graded B), except in cases of illness or emergency.

- All sources MUST be cited.**

Your **first draft is due on 11/20**. Please remember to bring three copies (four if you wish to retain one) to class, and to prepare a cover letter for each one.

Your **final draft is due on 12/4**. You need bring only one copy, but do not forget the cover letter.

Please also be sure to sign up for a draft discussion with me. And feel free to email me if you have any questions!