

**Introduction**

The following assignment is meant to be a further exploration of the research techniques you acquired in ENC 1101 with a specific application to some aspect of literature. As with any paper, whether it's an essay or a research paper, you need a set of criteria upon which to base your analysis. They may be derived from the particular work (e.g. what criteria would you judge any short story by?) or a particular author (e.g. does Hemingway always create an underdeveloped, unsympathetic female character?). From that criteria and your application of them to the work(s) you are analyzing for your paper, you will probably come up with a thesis statement or point that you want to make about your work(s); be sure that you state this clearly in the introduction of your paper. It could also be derived out of what a critic or critics have said about the work or its author. You may agree or disagree with the critics; just be sure you can support your position from an analysis of and constant reference to the work in question. The fact that a critic said something is not a proof of it. In fact, even if an author says something about a particular work, we can't put total credence in that, either. Do the best job that you can. Let the work(s) you're dealing with be your touchstone and proof for any conclusions you make.

**Date Paper is Due:**

**Thursday March 29, 2007**

**Length of Paper, Sources:**

**8 to 10 pages (typed); minimum of 5 sources**

**Documentation:**

**MLA (Parenthetical citations); you must include photocopies or printouts of sources**

**Research Topics**

1. Pick a novel which is considered by most people to be a classic (I have mentioned several that I feel fall into that category, e.g., *Huck Finn*, *Moby Dick*, *The Old Man and the Sea*, *The Red Badge of Courage*, etc.) and do an analysis of the work and its author. Though we have only dealt with shorter fiction, most of the things you could say about that apply to the novel.

Though you need not limit yourself to these, I think there are some techniques/devices that you need to think about in your analysis: theme, plot, characterization, point of view, and conflict. An analysis through these criteria may suggest a particular approach or conclusion that you might want to make about the work or a judgment you might want to make. I think it's also important to look at the person's life and any events in or around it that may have helped shape the author and that work. For example, if you were to look at

Stephen Crane's *Red Badge of Courage*, you would have to consider the Civil War as a related topic. We will also talk about this in class. **You must get the novel approved by me before you begin working on it.**

2. Pick any short story that we have not done in class (and there are many fine ones that we just couldn't get to) and take an approach similar to the one outlined above. Because this deals with a short story instead of a novel, though the range of topics will be smaller, you will be expected to conduct your analysis with more intensity and get into more detail.

Since it is a short story, you should be able to read it several times to come to some conclusions about it. Take notes each time you do. Consult criticism of the story and see what things have been said about it. Do you agree or disagree? Tell why. Keep going back to and citing the text of the story for your support and proof. We will discuss possible approaches in class, but that is entirely up to you.

3. Pick any poet that we have read or even one that we didn't read but is one that you think merits further inquiry and analysis. Read several poems by that author and try to come to some conclusion about the works or the poet based on your analysis of those works. Look to the critics for direction but go back to the poems for their support of your analysis. **Include copies of the poems in an appendix to your paper.**

If you see something present in one or two poems, can you find it in others? Why or why not? Did any of the critics find similar or even opposite things? What do you make of that? Keep going back to the poems themselves. Look at the sections in your textbook that dealt with Langston Hughes, Emily Dickinson, and Robert Frost for ideas about how to approach this.

4. Take one of the plays in our book, and do an analysis of it along the lines of the suggested analysis of a novel listed above. Use the set of questions from the handout to help you focus your inquiry. If it is a play that you have actually seen performed, try to deal with the question of reading versus watching a play. What problems does each activity pose? What are the advantages of one over the other? Though this is not always valid, if this was a play made into a film, and you saw the film, you can use that as your basis for comparison. Consider it a filmed play (though this is not really true).

5. Substitute the word "film" for play above, and you more or less have this topic. Though we are not going to discuss film per se, though we may discuss certain films, if you are really "into" film, you can do your research paper about a particular film. There is a set of questions that I can give you which may help you in your analysis. Sometimes writers tend to focus on the director when analyzing a film, e.g., Hitchcock, Spielberg, Stone, etc. Unless you're a real student of film, I wouldn't try this. If the film is based on a work of literature that you're familiar with, you may want to look at each of them in light of a set of general criteria. You can, of course, just analyze it in terms of its being a film.

**Remember, too, that you are going to give a brief oral report on your research topic, so you should be making notes and plans along the way that will help you with that.** I will give you a separate sheet about the oral report later. It is not as crucial to your success as this research paper is. I will be glad to discuss this both in and out of class.

## Using the Internet For Literary Research

Out of all the papers that students do for this class, the research paper is the one that disappoints me the most. Part of this is due to students' general lack of ability to find and use sources for literary research. Together, we are going to try and overcome this obstacle. On my website, as you should already have noticed, I've got links to many sites for literary research (<http://www.broward.edu/~pellingh/litlinks.html>). This includes the companion website to your textbook. You can use it to find both general and specific information about your author and work. I also have other aids on my website. There are sample research papers for you to look at and an essay I wrote giving an overview to doing literary research (<http://www.broward.edu/~pellingh/core1102.html>); I suggest you read it before you begin this assignment. I want you to work on your papers in class. That way, I can be there to give assistance and advice during the process. Of course, we will also use "conventional" library sources. I want you all to be successful with this assignment.