

Spring 2010 Seminar Project

- ⇒ **Research:** Students use library resources, and online databases to find thematically articles of literary criticism related to their spring reading project
- ⇒ **Activities:**
 - Library and computer lab time
 - Review of APA format
 - Work with thesis development, paper organization, incorporating quotations, sentence structure, and editing issues.
- ⇒ **Assignments:**
 - Working Bibliography
 - Processing Material: Students highlight and annotate copies of articles.
 - Thesis proposal: Students draft a working thesis that makes an argument regarding their chosen theme and mirrors proposed structure of paper.
 - Quote Outline: Students will break down theme into topics (sections of paper) and subtopics (paragraphs of sections), then organize quotes into outline form by paragraph, with topic sentences for body paragraphs.
 - Final Paper: A thesis-driven and organized extended exploration of how a particular theme presents itself in a body of both imaginative and non-fiction work. 8-10 pages, APA internal citation and works cited, blended quotes, use of selected sentence structures, carefully edited. Due the Tuesday after spring break.
 - **Spring Reading Project Novels—students choose one**

<i>Brave New World</i>	Aldous Huxley
<i>1984</i>	George Orwell
<i>Oryxs and Crake</i>	Margaret Atwood

Requirements:

1. Choose a novel to read independently from the following. You **MUST** choose a book you have not read before!
2. Read and **ANNOTATE one chapter** of the work carefully, using the tools we have practiced in class to write an analytical paper. You may want to highlight sections that support style, theme, and tone. Refer to “How to Mark a Book” handout.

3. In the library or on your own, choose two critical essays that relates to a theme in your novel. It is best to choose a theme that is broad enough in nature to apply to several works. **ANNOTATE** these works as well. Make sure your critical essay is not a Blog—that the author is clearly a literary critic and that the article has substance.

4. Prepare for and participate out of class discussions with your fellow classmates. I will provide time for those of you who wish to come after school. You will have several due dates for this paper. Please refer to your calendars, the list below, or check the web site.

- January 18 choose a novel from the list
- February 9 library day—bring money for copies
- February 12 APA citation information—in class
- February 16 summary of articles due--APA
- February 19 works cited page due—APA
- February 24-26 Wiki and Glog
- March 3 Style Passage due—APA
- March 9 Theme section due—APA
- March 23 Final copy of the paper is due
- March 26 Turnitin.com cut off

5. You will section your paper in the following way. Each section will be clearly marked—Introduction, Critical Article, Style, Theme, Conclusion, and Biblical Allusion.

6. Follow the instructions for each section in the boxes that follow. Suggested page lengths are given. Remember these are suggestions only. Your paper should be between eight to ten pages in length.

Introduction

A. An introduction of some substance. Include the novel's title, author, setting, and date of publication. It **may** also mention the historical/political/philosophical background and/or a statement of the work's place in literary history. Be sure your introduction leads into a thesis statement which gives an opinion about the theme(s) and/or purposes of the work that subsequent sections of the paper will support. Your thesis should not make a qualitative statement about the work's worth as literature, but should focus on meaning. Above all, the thesis will be a generality to which all subsequent sections of the discussion are subordinate and immediately relevant.

Critical Articles

B. A summary of two *scholarly* critical articles. The article should be as current as possible. Do not grab the first article you find; there are great articles, there are not so great articles. Plan on reading several articles to find ones that best illuminates your book. Attach a photocopy of the articles to the back of your paper. After summarizing the articles, agree or disagree with its major assertions.

Style

C. A discussion of the author's style in one representative passage of your choosing. Although style is the writer's voice and personality shining through the work, you must approach an analysis and presentation of this topic on a somewhat mechanical level—**an analysis of sentence structure and diction and how they work to contribute to the work's theme(s)**. Consider the variety and types of sentences (use syntax handout) with an analysis of the effect of such sentences. Look for patterns in the kind of diction used. Identify a specific tone or tonal shifts created through diction. Irony is frequently a result of stylistic technique. Word choices may convey emotional effects, sensuous qualities, or even a bombastic or learned tone. Recognizing literary style and its effect is one of the most difficult and illusive subjects to approach. Remember authors are making choices in their use of language and how they structures sentences which contributes to an overall effect. Attach a copy of the passage you've selected to analyze.

Theme

D. An explication of the novel's theme, the abstract concept that becomes concrete through its representation in person, action, and imagery in the work. The theme may generalize about the human condition, an individual's place in the universe, how people act under trying circumstances, or people's relationship with one another or with society. Consider both the author's purpose in writing the novel and the elements of the work that support or reveal that purpose. Two approaches to theme may be useful. Identifying the major conflict, recognizing the point at which the different elements of the conflict come together in the novel's climax, and determining what the resolution of that climax suggests will lead to an understanding of theme. Another path, particularly in the case of a highly symbolic novel, lies in tracing patterns of recurrent images throughout the work and in recognizing how these patterns function symbolically and thematically. Also use the "theme" analysis sheet to help you.

Biblical Allusion

E. In addition to the requirements above, find two or three biblical allusions in your novel and explain how they work within the context of the novel and what role they play in the novel. They should relate to theme in some way.

Conclusion

E. A conclusion that draws together all points of discussion. This section may call attention to the work's universality or even to its literary excellence. If the conclusion begins with a paraphrase of the thesis in section one, the remaining statements are echoes of other points in the introduction and key elements from the body of the discussion. **At the conclusion of this discussion, please provide a succinct, yet insightful thematic statement to close.**

Finally, if you want to schedule a conference with me about your project before your seminar date, please do the following:

- Sign up on the conference sheet.
- Be certain you have finished or nearly finished your novel.
- Be certain you have read these instructions carefully—in other words, do not start your conference with “I don’t know what you want.” I have carefully spelled out what I want. My running out of conference times does not excuse your work being due on schedule.