

## Assignment Sheet for Final Essay

Directions: Write a paper in which you develop a focused analysis of one of the four assigned novels. Your paper should develop as an extended close reading of a particular theme, character, motif, etc., in the novel (you can't write about the entire novel in a single paper). Your paper should have a clear main point/goal/thesis, and that main point should be fairly specific. In addition, you should demonstrate a basic understanding of relevant historical and cultural contexts of the literary work, and you will do a bit of outside research to contextualize your argument: you should find and cite 1–2 scholarly sources in the paper.

- Undergraduate papers should be around 1250 words.
- Graduate papers should be around 1500 words.

Your paper should follow MLA or Chicago formatting. Use a nice font. Give your paper an interesting title. Spend as much time as you can revising and editing before the final submission.

Your paper should have a crafted introduction and conclusion; a clear thesis statement/main idea that develops throughout the paper; analytical claims supported with textual evidence; logical structure and organization; and consistent citations. A strong paper contains the following:

### *A crafted introduction and conclusion*

- \* A strong introduction identifies the text/topic you will discuss; defines the topic of your essay; states why your main point matters; provides appropriate background/context; and contains a thesis statement that you will develop, expand, and/or explore in the paper.
- \* A strong conclusion makes a judgment about your original question/topic (but does not restate your thesis statement); makes a point that ties everything together; and gives the reader a “send-off.”

### *A clear thesis statement that develops throughout the paper*

- \* A thesis statement is a crystallized and concise sentence or set of sentences that assert/s your argument (the overall argument is the thesis). Your thesis statement should appear near the end of your introductory paragraph.
- \* Thesis development relies on effective and logical organization and close reading/s of your selected text/s. Your paper should evolve as a development and exploration of your thesis statement through direct quotation, paraphrase, discussion, and analysis of the text/s.

### *Analytical claims supported with textual evidence*

- \* Analytical claims are interpretations or ideas regarding texts (as opposed to opinions which offer no evidence); textual evidence is the documentation, paraphrase, or analysis of the text(s) linked to specific claims. Basically, this means close reading in which you link your ideas and statements about the text/s to specific words, phrases, lines, images, paragraphs in the text/s.

### *Logical structure and organization*

- \* Coherent paragraphs have strong topic sentences that develop systematically throughout the paper. Each paragraph should have a clear main point as well as effective transitions that provide a sense of coherence.
- \* At the sentence level, you should demonstrate clear phrasing, apt word choice, and a command of Standard English.