**HUM2250: 20th Century Humanities**

**Spring 2016 Paper Guidelines**

For this assignment, you will read *All Quiet on the Western Front*, *The Great Gatsby*, and *The* *Metamorphosis* (which are available for free online and are also on course reserve in the library) and choose ONE of these books to complete an essay of no less than 1000 words. You do not need to, nor are you expected to, answer all of the questions below; rather, they are meant to be a starting point to help you organize your thoughts into a well-written essay. Focusing on one or two questions is perfectly acceptable. Be sure not to give a book review or summary—you are reading these works in order to gain a greater understanding of the era. Use specific instances from the book to help support your argument. You should not use outside sources such as Sparknotes or Wikipedia; instead, papers should be written based on your understanding of the book as well as the ideas we discuss in class. This assignment will be worth 100 points towards your final grade.

**Option One: All Quiet on the Western Front**

Due: March 3

**Questions to Consider:**

1) In what ways does this novel critique the traditional imagery of war, honor, courage, glory, nationalism, etc.? How does Remarque depict war in this book? Do you think he sees war and nationalism as a positive thing? Why or why not?

2) How does the character of Paul change throughout the novel? Can these changes be attributed solely to the war or something else? Do you think he changes for better or worse? Explain your answer.

3) In this novel, the way that civilians and soldiers perceive war is totally different. First, explain how each group views the conflict, then discuss why these two groups have such vastly different ideas. Do you think either perspective is accurate? Why or why not?

4) The title of this book is quite significant. Why do you think that Remarque chose this title? What was he trying to say about war through it? As a reader, do you agree with this assessment?

**Option Two: The Great Gatsby**

Due: March 22

**Questions to Consider:**

1) In this book, how does F. Scott Fitzgerald depict the American dream? Is it portrayed as a positive or negative? Why do you think Fitzgerald chose to showcase it in such a manner?

2) Though this book is often considered to be “the” defining novel that depicts the “Roaring Twenties,” do you think that glamorizing this era was Fitzgerald’s main objective? What do you think that he is trying to say about American society during this era?

3) One of the lesser-explored themes of this book is how race, religion, and gender were depicted. What does Fitzgerald show us about the role of women, Jews, and blacks in American society? How does this fit in with what we know about America during this time?

4) At one point, Nick tells Gatsby that “you cannot repeat the past” to which Gatsby replies, “why of course you can!” How does the past shape the present in the lives of both Nick and Gatsby? Do you believe that Gatsby is correct in his assertion that we can repeat the past and get a fresh beginning? Do you think that Fitzgerald believes this? Why or why not?

**Option Three: The Metamorphosis**

Due: April 12

**Questions to Consider:**

1) How might people during this era (during and after World War I) be able to relate to this book/ the plight of Gregor? Do you think that this is limited to Europe or could Americans also relate? What events do you think caused this?

2) What type of commentary do you think that Kafka makes about contemporary society? Specifically, what do you think he is trying to say about human connections? For example, does Gregor’s family act in the way that readers would expect?

3) How do we see Gregor’s metamorphosis go along with how he sees the world in his new state? Do you think that this parallels the changes that are occurring in Europe during this period?

4) How does the idea of alienation fit into this work? Is Gregor unique in his alienation from the outside world or does Kafka intend for him to serve as a larger symbol?

5) Does the ending of this book leave readers with a sense of hope or hopelessness? Do you think Kafka is optimistic about human society going forward? Why or why not?

**In order to receive full credit:**

1. You need to write an essay of no less than 1000 words in length and provide me a signed word count to show that you have met this criterion. Failure to provide a word count will result in an automatic 10-point deduction from your grade.
2. Papers must be turned into me during class. I WILL NOT ACCEPT ELECTRONIC COPIES OR COPIES PLACED IN MY MAILBOX. If you know you will be unable to attend class on a day an essay is due, it is your responsibility to turn the assignment in early.
3. If a paper is not turned in to me in or before class on its due date, you will be penalized 10 points for each class period the paper is late. It is your responsibility to turn your assignments in on time.
4. Papers must be typed in 12-point font and double-spaced. I will not accept papers that are not typed.
5. In addition to a printed copy, the instructor reserves the right to require an electronic submission of students’ papers through the course Blackboard website. These papers will be submitted to SafeAssign or Turnitin.com for an "originality report." Papers with low originality scores will receive further investigation according to departmental procedures.
6. Make sure to proofread.
7. All information should come from the books and course materials- not outside sources such as Wikipedia. However, should you use outside information to (briefly) supplement your essay, be sure to refer to the “Understanding Plagiarism” link on Blackboard for information on how to properly cite the materials used.