ENC 1102

Instructor: Nick Rupert

Spring 2014

**Assignment**: Final Research Paper

**Due Date**: Thurs, April 17th

**Length**: 5-7 pages, plus Works Cited page

**Points**: 200, or 20% of final grade

**Purpose**: While there is no singular instance of “college writing,” much of the writing you will produce throughout your college career will involve you negotiating information produced by others (i.e. “research”). This assignment is designed to get you started with a research-based project—in our case, a project based on a work of literature.

Successful assignments will demonstrate the following:

• an ability to read critically, understanding and assessing multiple critical viewpoints

• an ability to practice critical reading/analysis of a work of literature

• an ability to construct and sustain a thesis (claim)

• an ability to support that thesis (claim)

• an ability to organize and structure a research paper in a logical and effective manner

FORMAT

● The type of argumentation we construct as academics should move beyond the standard five paragraph essay we learned in high school. This format assumes that any argument may be completed in five paragraphs. This format also assumes that one short introduction is enough to situate the reader into the context of the discussion. For these reasons, we should attempt to move beyond the limitations of the five paragraph essay.

CONTEXT PARAGRAPH(S)

● For a research paper, keep in mind that a longer context paragraph (or maybe two paragraphs) may be necessary to fully contextualize your argument.

Consider establishing the following criteria in the paper’s opening paragraphs:

 \*A brief introduction of your target text (i.e. “Good Country People”)

 \*A brief history of criticism surrounding your debate

 \*Your claim

BODY PARAGRAPHS

● Remember that all subsequent paragraphs must contribute to your paper’s central claim. In other words, yourcentral claim should always be supported by **subclaims**, which occur in the body paragraphs. If you find that one of your body paragraphs does not contribute to the overall argument, you should probably consider either revise the paragraph’s subclaim or removing the paragraph entirely. Most of the time it makes sense to establish clear topic sentences early on in your paragraphs, but keep in mind that with complex arguments, more than one sentence might be required to fully articulate a subclaim. Some body paragraphs may be devoted mostly to analyzing the arguments of another critic, in which case it makes sense that the subclaim will fall at the end of the paragraph, since the end of the paragraph is where you will **problematize**, **complicate**, or **refute** the critic’s claims.

● A persuasive academic typically establishes his/her methodology before getting too deep into the argument. Do not wait until the end of your paper to bring in your critics; situate them into the argument as early as possible.

● Paragraphs should follow a logical progression of thought. When your paragraphs follow logical progressions, you should not need to rely on tags like these: “First of all,” “Secondly,” “Later,” “Next,” “Finally,” “Lastly,” etc. Look at the transitions in the articles we have looked at this semester—how do these critics create transitions without using such tags?

CONCLUDING PARAGRAPH

● In high school, we were taught to basically end our papers by regurgitating the introduction. It was considered a sin to introduce any new information in the conclusion, since the conclusion is meant to conclude, not introduce. But in reality, academics often use the concluding paragraphs as a springboard to refigure their claim and push it beyond the initial claim. To be sure, this space should be used to really nail the idea of the “big picture”—what the text in question reveals about our society, etc. Look at the examples of academic writing you’ve researched for your Annotated Bibliography. How do these two critics give their arguments that final bit of lift?

● In addition to re-envisioning your claim and perhaps pushing it that extra bit further, the concluding paragraph is also a good place for an academic to suggest further research for his or her peers. In a short research paper, we acknowledge that there is no possible way to cover all angles of a topic; therefore, it is common for academics to suggest that other academics research and discuss a certain area of the conversation that was otherwise left unexplored. However, this does not mean you have an excuse to be a lazy academic and abandon your project before arriving at a conclusion.

WORKS CITED

● Since an Annotated Bibliography was already required in a previous assignment, you are required to list all your sources in Works Cited format, following formal MLA protocol.

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TECHNICAL SPECIFICS

 While most of the effort for this paper should be spent on content and solid argumentation, technical proficiency is also paramount for your paper’s success.

1). Follow **MLA formatting** rules. Any questions should be resolved by an MLA-approved resource such as the OWL at Purdue website.

2). Your paper should be double-spaced.

3). **Always reference extraneous information** unless said information is so obvious that this is not necessary. If you are in doubt, go ahead and include a citation just to be sure. **Always remember to establish agency for outside ideas in addition to providing citations (i.e. “According to Smith, . . .”). Citations and agency are two distinct methods of attribution.**

4). **Your final copy should be 5-7 pages, plus a Works Cited**. Where you end up between these parameters will depend on what sort of argument you have constructed and what sort of rhetorical strategies you choose to pursue.

5). **Please use Times New Roman in 12 point font**. Bold and italics should be avoided except to fulfill MLA requirements. Flashy fonts will only distract (and probably irritate) your reader. Using distracting fonts is not appropriate for this assignment!

6). **1 inch margins** all around.

7). **Include proper identification at the top left-hand corner of your paper which satisfies MLA standards**. No need for a cover page. No need for neon ink or glitter or elbow macaroni either. Please use regular old white paper and black ink.

8). **Include a WORKS CITED** of at least 6 sources (including the short story/poem/play you are referencing) which satisfies MLA standards.

9). **Re-read all writing guideline documents we’ve covered this semester.**

10). Take advantage of Valencia College’s writing center. Have a capable reader provide feedback on your work. **On the final paper, your writing should be lucid, authoritative, and free of mechanical errors.**

11). Before turning your paper in, make sure the paper quality is acceptable, and make sure the print quality is acceptable—please do not turn in papers with stripes, blurs, fades, or any other printing aberrations.

12). **Include a HEADER with your name and page number** at the top right-hand corner.