

## **ENC 1102 – 1600 Word Paper #2: Using Theory and Literary Research**

### **Assignment:**

In this paper, you will also do a basic literary analysis. Essentially what this means is that you will be arguing how an author constructs a text in order to eventually arrive at the theme he or she wants to convey. However, you will also be using the theories we learned as a guide to your analysis, and research into those theories (and the authors) as evidence to support your claims. For example, how/why does the headless horseman represent a powerless (castrated) father figure? You can state that, but you have to show it is true—what we learned about psychoanalysis and the Oedipus complex helps you explain that.

Now, this is like your first paper, but you are now adding the element of literary research (criticism and theory) to help support your interpretation. You will research articles about authors, the theories, the genres, or all of that. You can use any story we have studied in this class, but you cannot use a story you wrote about in the first paper.

You will find that discussing your paper with me at your conference will help, but you need to come prepared to your conference—think about the stories you liked? Why did you like that story specifically? What did the author do that grabbed your interest and kept it, and how did you relate to the theme? What specific parts of the story (quotes, word choice, etc) illustrate that?

Your paper must be more than a book report—do not summarize the stories for more than 3-4 sentences. **You need to hit at analysis—rather than focusing on what is happening, ask yourself “why is what is happening important to the theme the author wants to express to me? How does that author express that?”** Also, you need to ask **“how does theory help me decode the symbolism, motivation, conflict, etc.”** If you tell me something that happened in the story, your next sentence needs to show me evidence of it. Then you need to explain why that event or sentence or quote is important to your argument (how does it prove the thesis?). If you give me critical theory evidence, then your next sentence needs to tell me why that quote helps you make your argument. Your next sentence after that needs to make clear or explain how your argument is different from the one you just quoted—does it add, contrast, build on, etc.

*Always come back to basics: Think about the story or stories you want to analyze, and then ask yourself these questions:*

Who is the main character? What is the conflict he/she faces? How does he/she develop as a result of that conflict? What dominant idea does that development support or represent (theme)? How does the author construct the story with literary elements in order to support that theme? Now, ask yourself, do any of the theoretical approaches we have studied help me understand these?

Remember, you are explaining and arguing to your reader how the author constructs a story and what goes into that process—you are not telling them what happens in the story. You are telling them why what happens is important to the author’s theme, and how theory contributes to or explains that theme.

## **Possible Topics Paper # 2 (try to come up with ideas that interest you)**

How Gilman writes “The Yellow Wallpaper” as a Feminist Gothic story. (What is “Feminist Gothic?”)

“The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” compared to “Rip Van Winkle” as PostColonial texts (or even Gothic Texts)

How the Poets (3) or one poet (using 3 of that poets texts) of the Harlem Renaissance express a postcolonial identity through their poetry.

Feminist analysis of Gilman’s “Yellow Wallpaper” and Hemingway’s “Hills Like White Elephants.”

Southern Gothic, Postcolonialism, Feminism, or incest and “A Rose for Emily” by Faulkner. Reader Response in “An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge”

Feminist Readings of Kate Chopin

Postcolonial or New Historicist readings of “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” or “The Open Boat”

Representations of Masculinity and power in “Hills Like White Elephants”

### **PLEASE NOTE:**

**Simply citing an encyclopedia entry or a dictionary definition is not literary research.** Such citations are only helpful if you are explaining an obscure word origin or definition. Therefore, I should not see any sentences that look like this: *According to Webster’s dictionary, “love” is defined as “having strong emotions for someone else” (“love” Webster’s 234).* Passing off entries like this as research is not college level. Also, Dictionary definitions are not college-level research, neither is an encyclopedia entry. You must use databases or printed sources—no google basic websites.

**If you ever need to cite a definition, it is part of clarification, it is not literary research.**

Unless it highlights something obscure (like how the word “grotto” forms the origin of the word “grotesque”), I will not consider it as research. If you do cite a definition, you need to use the *Oxford English Dictionary*, which is available to you as a database in the list of databases found via the Valencia Libraries’ website. ***Let me be clear—this part of the assignment is non-negotiable: papers without research or citations will earn a failing grade.***

You should have a minimum of one Primary Source (the story you are analyzing), and a minimum of two Secondary sources (your research sources).

You may only use the library databases and print sources. Random Google searches or random webpages are unacceptable, and they will severely impact your content grade. Wikipedia entries will fail your paper. This limitation is to force you to develop your research skills beyond simple internet searches. You need to learn the value of peer-reviewed scholarly journals and resources such as *JSTOR*.