Instructor: Dr. Aimee Pozorski / DiLoreto 208-005/ pozorskia@ccsu.edu / 832-2773

Class meets: MW 1:40-2:55 in Maria Sanford, Room 103.

Office hours: TR 9:25-10:50; MW 12-1:30; by appointment

Content:
The above map of the world, drawn by Chinese mapmaker Mo Yi Tong in 1763, is a copy made purportedly from an earlier map drawn in 1418, seventy-four years before Columbus sailed to the “New World.” While scholars are still researching the authenticity of the map’s claimed ancestry, it no doubt raises questions concerning the Western belief that Columbus in fact discovered North America. If contemporary thought has taught us anything, then, it is that we can no longer trust those things we had once taken for granted: the consistency and dependability of language, the fundamental goodness of humanity, a stable and “true” version of history, to name only a few. If four of the most significant influences on modern thinking—Einstein, Marx, Freud, and Darwin—have anything in common, it is the belief that questions are not meant to be answered, but rather, re-opened time and again. In that vein, the contemporary literature we will study over the course of the semester asks more questions than it is willing to answer—questions about humanity and our values following the Holocaust, the lingering effects of colonialism, and the role that terror plays in our every day lives. Written from a variety of national perspectives, these nine texts will challenge what we hold to be true, not only about literary representation, but also about the very categories of subjectivity and history.

Required Texts:
Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (1958)
Llosa, Mario Vargas, *The Bad Girl* (2007)
Anthony Doerr, *All the Light We Cannot See* (2014)

**Course Goals:**
- *To introduce* you to principles of literary analysis
- *To trace* a history of writing around the world from 1950 to the present. This history will convey not only the mundane aspects of contemporary life, but also the effects of such monumental events as the Holocaust, colonialism, and the 9-11 terrorist attacks upon the U.S.
- *To ask* what contemporary literature can teach us about contemporary life
- *To become more versed* in literary theoretical discourse, exemplified by trauma theory.
- *To develop* skills in writing a traditional research paper.

**Course Expectations:**
1. In order to do well in this class, you must—at the bare minimum—*keep up* with the primary reading and attend every class.

2. All papers should be submitted on time. PLEASE DO NOT SEND PAPERS ELECTRONICALLY VIA EMAIL. While I return papers within two weeks of the due date, I cannot promise that I’ll return late papers with that kind of efficiency. Any late work will result in a lowered grade at my discretion. Anything not submitted by hard copy into my hands on the day it is due is subject to being lost.

3. The *written requirements* for this course comprise eight abstracts of secondary sources, two close reading papers, one in class presentation, one final research paper, and one final exam. Please see the end of the syllabus for more thorough descriptions of each of these graded assignments. You must complete every assignment to pass this course.

4. The CCSU honor code for Academic Integrity is in effect in this class. You may find it online at: <http://www.ccsu.edu/AcademicIntegrity/>. Please read it carefully. You might especially be interested in the Undergraduate Academic Misconduct Policy, found here: <http://www.ccsu.edu/AcademicIntegrity/UndergradAcadMisconductPolicy.htm>.

5. As discussed in the Undergraduate Academic Misconduct Policy, plagiarism is forbidden. While I value highly cooperative and collaborative work, all writing you submit must be your own. Because a writer’s ideas and the words he or she uses to express these ideas are regarded as property, you will be punished justly if you use any author’s phrasings or ideas without citation.

6. Just as I will consistently treat you with courtesy, I expect you to treat this classroom with the respect it deserves as a place of higher learning. This means that cell phones must be put away for the duration of the class and tardiness should be avoided. If you come in late, take a seat by
the door so as not to interrupt the class and have your notebook, book, and pen out before entering the classroom.

7. The best way to reach me is via e-mail. *Please copyedit your email.* Include a salutation and sign it. I give full attention to e-mail conventions and the detail of typewritten text. Please extend to me the same courtesy.

8. CCSU, the Department of English, and I are all committed to supporting equal access to the content of this course. Students with disabilities (physical, learning, psychological, or other) that may affect their performance in this class are encouraged to contact the Office of Special Student Services. Students who wish to discuss the possibility of accommodations are also encouraged to meet me in my office hours. An OSSS staff member will be able to coordinate accommodations for this class. Information on OSSS can be found here: <http://www.ccsu.edu/specialstudentservices/>. The phone number is (860)832-1955.

9. You will be expected to sign an attendance sheet at the beginning of every class period, so make sure you are not late. The success of this course depends upon active class participation of all class members. Noticeable absenteeism (greater than 4 absences) will result in a lowered grade at my discretion. Should you miss class for any reason, you are responsible for obtaining the relevant notes and information from your classmates.

10. YOU MUST COMPLETE EVERY ASSIGNMENT TO PASS THIS COURSE.

11. Caveat: All assignments and due dates are subject to change with notice.

**Grading Policy:**
Each paper and exam will be graded on a scale from A to F. These grades will be determined by the coherence, depth, consistency, and clarity of your argument, its relevance to the course, and the amount of effort your work displays. I will calculate your final grade using the following percentages and criteria:

Two close reading papers: 2(20) = 40%
One 10-15 page research paper = 30%
Annotated bibliography that reflects your use of secondary sources: 5%
One close reading, in-class presentation: 5%
Final exam: 15%
Eight abstracts of secondary sources (pass/fail; you must submit all abstracts to earn the points): 5%

**Criteria:**
A An “A” paper, exam, or presentation would move your instructor and the best members of your class to admiration. It implies not only that the theme is virtually free of errors but that it makes its point clearly, logically, and gracefully. An “A” final grade is the product of work of consistently high quality and occasional brilliance.
B  A “B” paper reveals effective performance of the assignments. The theme is clear and logical but with perhaps some small problems of coherence or development and without the stylistic grace of an “A” paper. It has no more than an occasional error in spelling, sentence structure, diction, usage, or punctuation.

C  A “C” paper indicates that you have performed the assignment adequately but usually with some problems of clarity, logic, support, or documentation, grammar, mechanics, and spelling. Improvement is desirable, but you should remember that a “C” grade does indicate average college work.

D  A “D” paper reveals a failure to perform the assignment adequately or to overcome some problems pointed out in previous themes. The “D” paper only partially fulfills the requirements of the topic, and it usually has a significant number of errors in spelling, sentence structure, usage, diction, and punctuation. When you receive a “D” you are being given warning that you must improve.

F  An “F” paper indicates gross failure at carrying out the assigned topic. An “F” grade may also be given to students who make frequent errors or those who consistently fail to seek out help and correct their indiscretions. It is, of course, a failing grade.

Schedule:

Week 1  January
Wed 20   Introductions
Read: Ida Fink, “A Scrap of Time” in A Scrap of Time and Other Stories

Week 2  
Mon 25   Read: Fink, A Scrap of Time and Other Stories
Wed 27   Read: Fink, A Scrap of Time and Other Stories
Read: “Ida Fink’s Scraps and Traces” by Ruth Ginsburg (JSTOR)
Write: Secondary source abstract #1

Week 3  February
Mon 1   Read: Michael Ondaatje, The English Patient

Week 4
Mon 8   Read: Ondaatje, The English Patient
Read: “Textual Hauntings” by Amy Novack (JSTOR)
Write: Secondary source abstract #2

Wed 10   Read: Arundhati Roy, The God of Small Things
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<th>Week 5</th>
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<th>Read: Roy, <em>The God of Small Things</em></th>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 15</td>
<td></td>
<td>Read: Roy, <em>The God of Small Things</em></td>
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<td>Wed 17</td>
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<td>Read: Roy, <em>The God of Small Things</em></td>
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<th>Week 6</th>
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<th>Read: Roy, <em>The God of Small Things</em></th>
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<td>Mon 22</td>
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<td>Read: Roy, <em>The God of Small Things</em></td>
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<td>Read: Roy, <em>The God of Small Things</em></td>
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<td>Read: “Trauma and Temporal Hybridity” by Elizabeth Outka (JSTOR)</td>
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<td>Write: Secondary source abstract #3</td>
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<td>Write: Secondary source abstract #3</td>
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<td>Wed 24</td>
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<td>Read: Achebe, <em>Things Fall Apart</em></td>
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<th>Week 7</th>
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<th>Read: Achebe, <em>Things Fall Apart</em></th>
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<td>Mon 29</td>
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<td>Read: Achebe, <em>Things Fall Apart</em></td>
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<td>March</td>
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<td>Read: Achebe, <em>Things Fall Apart</em></td>
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<td>Wed 2</td>
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<td>Read: Achebe, <em>Things Fall Apart</em></td>
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<th>Week 8</th>
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<th>Read: Achebe, <em>Things Fall Apart</em></th>
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<td>Mon 7</td>
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<td>Read: Achebe, <em>Things Fall Apart</em></td>
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<td>Read: “Charting the Constellation: Past and Present in Things Fall Apart” by Sofia Samatar</td>
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<td>Read: “Charting the Constellation: Past and Present in Things Fall Apart” by Sofia Samatar</td>
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<td>Write: Secondary source abstract #4</td>
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<td>Write: Secondary source abstract #4</td>
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<td>Write: Close Reading Paper #1</td>
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<td>Write: Close Reading Paper #1</td>
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<td>Wed 9</td>
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<td>Read: Ha Jin, <em>Waiting</em></td>
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<th>Week 9</th>
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<th>Read: Jin, <em>Waiting</em></th>
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<td>Mon 14</td>
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<td>Read: Jin, <em>Waiting</em></td>
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<td>Wed 16</td>
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<td>Read: Jin, <em>Waiting</em></td>
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<td>Read: “An Interview with Ha Jin” by Jerry Varsava</td>
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<td>Read: “An Interview with Ha Jin” by Jerry Varsava</td>
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<td>Write: Secondary source abstract #5</td>
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<td>Write: Secondary source abstract #5</td>
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<td>Guest Lecturer: Dr. Laurence Petit</td>
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**Spring Break Week of March 21-25**

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<th>Week 10</th>
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<th>Read: Mario Vargas Llosa, <em>The Bad Girl</em></th>
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<td>Mon 28</td>
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<td>Read: Mario Vargas Llosa, <em>The Bad Girl</em></td>
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<td>Wed 30</td>
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<td>Read: Llosa, <em>The Bad Girl</em></td>
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<th>Week 11</th>
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<th>Read: Llosa, <em>The Bad Girl</em></th>
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<td>April</td>
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<td>Read: Llosa, <em>The Bad Girl</em></td>
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<td>Mon 4</td>
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<td>Read: “Dangerous Obsession” by Kathryn Harrison (<em>The New York Times</em>)</td>
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Write: Secondary source abstract #6

Wed 6  Read: Anna Winger, *This Must Be the Place*

**Week 12**
Mon 11  Read: Anna Winger, *This Must Be the Place*

Wed 13  Read: Winger, *This Must Be the Place*
Read: “We’ll Always Have Berlin” by Liesl Schillinger (*The New York Times*)
Write: Secondary source abstract #7

**Week 13**
Mon 18  Read: Anthony Doerr, *All the Light We Cannot See*

Wed 20  Read: Doerr, *All the Light We Cannot See*

**Week 14**
Mon 25  Read: Doerr, *All the Light We Cannot See*

Wed 27  Read: Doerr, *All the Light We Cannot See*
Read: “Anthony Doerr’s All the Light We Cannot See and the Limits of Holocaust Fiction” by Sandor Goodhart (via email)
Write: Secondary Source Abstract #8
Write: Close Reading Paper #2

**Week 15**
Last Week of Classes
**May**
Mon 2  Write: Annotated Bibliography

Wed 4  Write: IN CLASS Final Exam

**Week 16**
Final exams

Wed 11  Write: Final Research Paper
Submit in our regular classroom between 8:00-10:00 a.m. (*See below for specific guidelines.)

Have a great summer!

**Graded, Written Assignments**

*Abstracts of Secondary Sources*

The easiest way to find the eight critical articles available online, is through the MLA or LION bibliographic databases available through JSTOR. In order to access the MLA database, for example, go
to the library’s home page. From there, click on “Digital Library Resources.” Next, click on “A to Z List of Databases.” Then, click on the M and scroll down to find the “MLA Bibliography.” Next, type in the name of the author and the title or topic of the article. At the bottom of the bibliographic entry, you will likely have to click on “find at CCSU.” Once you do that, you’ll be given the option of accessing the article through JSTOR. Click on that option, and read/print the article as a PDF file you can bring to class.

The abstract will be about one or two paragraphs only – give an overview of the article (including thesis and reasons), discuss the author’s values and critical methodology, and comment, briefly, on the article’s merits or shortcomings.

**Close Reading Papers**

Your close reading papers should be 4-5 pages long, double spaced, and address thematic and literary concerns of a particular text. That is, you will begin with a thesis (a statement that is arguable) and will proceed to flesh out this claim with a further explanation of your reasoning and a careful reading of the quotations you choose (and cite!) in order to support your claim. The focus here is on your thorough interpretation of the quotes. Do not simply cite some lines and paraphrase them. Give an explanation for nearly every word, every sound, and every punctuation mark. If you quote three lines of material, you should type at least six lines of interpretation.

If a reasonable person would not argue with your thesis, then it is not a strong thesis. Please take chances with your readings! Be creative. Your audience for these papers is your instructor and the rest of the class, so you can assume that we have all read the work, know the characters and themes, and eventual outcomes of the texts. It is your job to look so closely at the material that you locate in it something (again) that those of us, on a first reading, may have overlooked or would have interpreted in another way.

Finally, please pay attention to formatting issues. The paper should be typed in a 12 point font, Times New Roman if you have it. You should have 1” margins on all sides. You should have page numbers in the top, right hand corner. Your name, my name, the course number, and the date of the assignment should appear in the upper left hand corner of the first page. Your paper should have a title and a Works Cited page.

Your work should be carefully edited. I will give your paper back to you if I find five typos or grammatical mistakes on the first page.

**Final Exam**

The examination will cover both the assigned reading and the material covered in class sessions. Again, even in the exams, you will be graded not only on your knowledge of the material, but also on the way you present your ideas. Ideally, all of your writing will take the form of a thesis-based argument; it will be carefully written and proofread. The final will feature three essay questions asking you to think together the theory and the contemporary American literary tradition (you choose 2) and eight passages for identification and close reading (you choose four).

**Presentation**

You will sign up for your presentation during the third class meeting, so start looking through the books ahead of time to choose your presentation date. The presentation will be about 20-30 minutes long, including Q & A, and will take as its focus one compelling detail or passage from the text assigned for that day. Your presentation will include a handout – so bring 15 copies to class. The handout will have these parts: a title, an overview, a thesis, a list of passages for close reading, three open ended discussion questions that ask the class to consider the implications of your thesis, and a list of Works Cited. Try to
keep the handout to one or two sides of a sheet of paper. You may use the ideas in your presentation for your close reading paper and your research paper and cite the presentation ideas of others as well.

**Research Essay Project**

For this project, you will research and write a 10-12 page research essay that enriches our understanding of the relationship between history, trauma, and the global novel. To do this, you will need to 1) narrow down the broad subject to a focused topic you can address fully in your page range; 2) have your own understanding of significant secondary sources that take up your topic; and 3) propose your own arguable claim about this sufficiently-narrowed topic.

In addition to the essay, components of the project include a close reading paper that considers the literary attributes of your topic, a research paper proposal (to be drafted in class), and an annotated bibliography.

These are the recommended steps you should take in beginning this work:

**A. Develop a Topic.**

The subject, as you already know, is “contemporary world literature.” However, this needs to be significantly narrowed to a topic you can thoroughly address in approximately 10-12 pages – considering your close readings and responses to secondary sources.

You may think about your close reading papers as an initial exploration of this topic. You have two close reading papers due this semester; one of them can be used in your research paper as well. Your annotated bibliography – letter C below – is due in class on Monday May 2.

**B. Research: Locating Secondary Sources**

You can locate secondary sources through

1. The secondary sources we are reading throughout the semester. Although the secondary sources each take on a different topic, you are free to go back to one or two of these essays for your research paper.
2. Books in the stacks of Burritt Library. Search CONSULS to see what the CSU system has. Burritt has many interesting books –and there are still others at the three other CSU schools. This is why it is important to have a topic early. You may need to “Request” a book from a sister school, and will need to give the couriers about a week to process this request.
3. MLA Bibliography, available online through the Burritt Library website. Go to the university home-page ccsu.edu. Click on “Library” on the top right hand side of the page. Click on “database finder” under Search (on the left.) Click on “M” for MLA Bibliography. Click on the MLA Bibliography link. From there, you will get to MLA through an EBSCO host Research Database.

To do an initial search, I would type in *the title of the novel you are researching* and see what you find. The article titles in the list of hundreds of possibilities will let you know if you’ve hit upon your topic.

Choose peer-reviewed journal articles. Good journals include: *Contemporary Literature*, *Twentieth Century American Literature*, *American Literature*, *Mosaic*, and *MELUS*. We will be reading as models secondary source articles from these journals throughout the semester as well.

**C. Preparing the Annotated Bibliography**
Your annotated bibliography should include six entries. You should submit it with your final research paper.

1. The six works should come from respected sources as obtained through the three methods above.
2. You may not count google.com searches or wikipedia, dictionary entries, personal websites, magazine or newspaper articles toward your research. Although Google Scholar often offers a good place to start.
3. Each entry should include three parts: citation, summary, and evaluation of the source as it relates to your topic.

D. Draft the Essay

Write a 10-15 pp. essay that articulates your argument emerging out of a close reading of a contemporary global novel and how that argument relates to what others have proposed regarding your topic.

At the end of the essay’s introduction, you should state a thesis making an argument, and going one step further to emphasize how your argument is in conversation with other, previously-published scholars.

The essay should include a close reading of passages significant to your topic. Close reading draws on prosody, allusions, point of view, tone, symbols, metaphors, as it relates to the content, or message, of the passage itself.

Assume the reader has read the novel and do not summarize the plot or go into detail about basic character traits.

Your essay will also include a fairly close reading of the secondary sources. Convey for the reader, early on, what the other scholars say and how they say it—that is, what methodology they use. Discuss also the merits of these points of view, and the shortcomings, which you hope to correct via your particular reading of a particular novel.

You must indicate the source of any information you take from someone else – even if you summarize or paraphrase the information. Cite, when in doubt.

E. Peer-review

I highly recommend that you pair up with one or two students from class in order to give and provide feedback on the paper drafts. When you read each other’s papers, look for an introduction that leads up to a clear statement of the thesis, main body paragraphs – logically organized – that reflect promises made in the thesis, use of close reading to support a claim, engagement with secondary sources, and a proper conclusion that further solidifies the significance of the paper.

F. Submit your Research Paper

But, before you do, integrate suggestions from your peer-review meeting. Read your paper. Rethink your argument. Restructure paragraphs. Locate more persuasive evident. Revise sentences. Choose more precise words. Proof read and edit. Proof read again.

The essay should be bundled together with a black binder clip with the following documents in this order:

1. A clean copy of the revised essay
2. Works cited page – using MLA style
3. *Revised* Annotated bibliography, incorporating even the sources you do not cite
4. Process statement: a short memo in which you evaluate your own writing process. Discuss what you were trying to do with the paper, what seemed to work and what did not work. Discuss how the paper developed from pre-writing, through drafts, and to the final revision. Include major decisions you made while composing and what difficulties you encountered as you wrote. Tell me what you learned about your topic and what you learned about your writing process along the way.
5. Topic proposal (written in class on Monday, May 2 and typed for formal submission)
6. Draft of your close reading paper
7. Peer-responses
8. All other drafts of the essay if they exist in hard copy.

Due: Wednesday, May 11 at 2:00 p.m. in our classroom.

**Additional Formatting Advice**

Please follow this advice carefully when writing assignments for this class.

1. All papers should be typed, double-spaced, stapled or paper-clipped, and given both page numbers and 1” margins. Longer papers (i.e., the three main papers) should be given a title, too. Handwritten papers will not be accepted.

2. When you first mention a work and author, give the author’s full name and the text’s full title (including its subtitle, if it has one), as well as its original date of publication. Make sure this subject is followed by a strong verb to indicate what the text accomplishes: illustrates, highlights, considers, emphasizes, portrays, etc.

3. When should you underline or italicize a work’s title, and when should you reference it with quotation marks? The distinction is relatively simple: Novels, novellas, and epic poems are set off by italics or underlining (the difference being a matter of style; the choice is yours). Short stories, essays, and most poems, by contrast, are set off by quotation marks.

4. Cultivate a formal and concise writing style, and aim to express yourself with clarity, style, and grace. Whenever possible, avoid word contractions (“doesn’t,” “don’t,” “couldn’t,” et cetera), slang, and overuse of the passive voice. Feel free to use the first person pronoun “I” as in “I argue here that ...” or “I propose ....”

5. Pay attention to your prose style as you revise. Consider, for instance, the remarks of Florence King, one of the South’s most gifted and irreverent writers, on her early publications:

   You may ask: why didn’t the editors of these books catch these faults and call them to my attention? I imagine they did catch most of them, but there was nothing they could do. Editors really are overworked, though not as much as some of them like to claim. But even if they had had time for heavy blue-penciling, it would not have taught me anything. Self-editing is the only kind that really works, and it takes years to develop. Besides, I love it. Some women primp; I rewrite. Polishing and tightening my prose is my idea of good clean narcissistic fun.


6. List the works you mention in a list of Works Cited, at the end of your essay. If you consult several works but do not cite them, you may wish to include them as well, listing these works in a bibliography. Adopt the MLA format and consult a handbook if necessary. Additionally, include the
original date of publication of primary sources, and pay particular attention to the specific punctuation
conventions.

7. Before submitting your assignment, check your spelling, grammar, and quotations for accuracy. This
simple exercise will help you catch many errors, and will almost certainly improve your grade.