Research Paper
SWright, UCOR 102

For this assignment, I am asking you to write a 5-page research paper that presents an argument regarding Cormac McCarthy’s *No Country For Old Men*. This paper should use at least two sources from a discipline of your choosing to explicate the text (i.e., the sources needn’t be literary criticism). For example, students enrolled in the psychology program may wish to study Chigurh’s expression of emotion, and students enrolled in the theology or philosophy program may wish to study the role of fate in *NCfOM*.

The purpose of bringing in what might seemingly be unrelated evidence to bear on your analysis is to extend the way you think about and understand literature. Literature is about the human condition, and disciplines across the university engage this theme in various ways. The relevance of integrating information to enhance the focus and scope of your literary analysis, and how well that information is used to further your analytical agenda will be part of how you are evaluated for this assignment.

I suggest that you take the following steps to write your paper:

1. **Ask questions:** You should begin by inquiring into problematic elements of a text. Once you find a problem that interests you, identify what *exactly* is at the source of the problem.

2. **Develop a thesis:** After identifying the source of your selected problem, *ask a specific question* about it, and *answer that question*. Your answer will be your *thesis statement*.

3. **Research your thesis:** Once you have developed a thesis statement, research relevant sources from relevant disciplines. In service of your research, we will spend one full class period in the Gumberg Library’s Technology Classroom (where you will explore tools/methods for literary research), and time in class discussing how to correctly and ethically incorporate your research.

4. **Pre-write:** Plan out the trajectory of your paper. What theoretical conceits do you need to clarify in order to make your argument? What textual evidence will you use as support? How will you organize all of this information?

5. **WRITE:** At this point in the semester, you all know how to do this. Things to keep in mind:
   - **DON’T FORGET YOUR THESIS**
   - Use STRONG TOPIC SENTENCES (remember the P of the PEAS paragraph structure!)
   - Make sure that every sentence you write is advancing your argument in some way (don’t be repetitive!)
   - Use *active voice* (subject-verb-object) and AVOID PREPOSITIONS (use the PARAMEDIC METHOD to write clear and concise prose).
   - Contextualize quotations and explain why they are significant to your argument (remember the A/S of the PEAS paragraph structure!)

Regarding quotation/description:
* Though you may need to provide some context for the particular event or lines that you’re focusing on, you should **not** at any point summarize the text. You should assume that your audience has read and understands the text, so you don’t need to explain what happened.
* Make sure to document your quotes correctly using MLA style (you should include a bibliography).

5 pgs. TNR 12 pt. font
DRAFT DUE: 4/19
FINAL DUE: 4/29, 10 PM (to Blackboard)
Grading Rubric for Research Paper
SWright, UCOR 102

Student: ______________________________________________________________________

This paper is worth 40 points toward your final grade. *

I will rate each question below according to the following scale:
5= Excellent 4= Very good 3= Good 2= Needs work 1= Poor

• Does the paper have a clearly stated, original thesis statement? Is this thesis sustained throughout the paper?
• Does the paper use the Toulmin Method to present a logical, evidence-based argument?
• Is the paper well organized? Do the paragraphs transition smoothly from one idea to the next?
• Is the writing style clear and free of grammatical errors? Is the paper free of plagiarism?
• Does the paper demonstrate a close, critical reading of the primary text?
• Does the paper demonstrate a thoughtful and well-reasoned analysis of the text? Is it informed by a working knowledge of genre, and relevant literary devices?
• Is the paper sensitive to the contexts that inform the primary text (social, political, aesthetic, psychological, religious, etc.)?
• Does the paper demonstrate a comprehension of and response to relevant scholarly sources?
• Does the paper correctly and ethically incorporate scholarly sources using a recognized citation/documentation style?
• Does the paper exhibit creativity?

Total points: (______ x40) / 50 = ______ /40 points

* 10% will be deducted from your grade if you did not attend the library research session on 4/14