

Final Paper Assignment

In your final assignment for the quarter, you will put into practice the research and writing skills that you have learned during this course. The goal is for you to conduct original research on a text or texts of your choice and to present that research in a compelling, polished way.

Important Dates:

Mini-Paper 5 (Research Project Proposal)	Due XX
Mini-Paper 6 (Annotated Bibliography, Outline, and Working Thesis)	Due XX
Individual Conferences	Thursday XX and Friday XX
Final Paper (25%)	Due XX

Your Task: write a 7-10 page thesis-driven research paper on a topic of your own devising that draws in some way on your work in Special Collections. You have two options for this paper:

1. Select one of the texts from the syllabus, and place it in conversation with a text from Special Collections. Write an essay about your two texts that makes and supports a claim about a specific cultural idea and how it functions in both texts (i.e. European ideas about and descriptions of non-Christian bodies; the reconfiguration of XX convention of the Romance genre in Heywood's *A Fair Maid of the West* and YY text from SC; etc.).
 - You can address both of your texts equally, or you can use one text as a starting point or a lens through which to examine the other.
 - You should research both of your texts thoroughly, employing the methods that you practiced in class and during your group project. Your final product should reflect this thorough research.
 - **For this option, you must incorporate material from at least one critical article on the text from the syllabus.** You can use the article that we read or another that you find through the library databases (see the "Library Resources" handout on SmartSite for tips on finding and using critical articles).
2. Select a text from Special Collections and write an essay about it that makes and supports a claim about a specific aspect of the text (content, historical context, material history, etc.).
 - You are free to write about the text that you worked on for your group project, the text that you wrote about for Mini-Paper 4, or any other text that you encountered while in Special Collections that caught your interest.
 - You should research your text thoroughly, employing the methods that you practiced in class and during your group project. Your final product should reflect this thorough research.
 - **For this option, you must incorporate material from at least 4 secondary sources** (books, articles, websites, etc.) that you found during your research.

Your options are purposefully open-ended; in order to conduct original research, you should come up with and pursue your own research questions about your texts. If you have an idea for

your paper that doesn't fit within these categories, come and discuss it with me as soon as you can, and I'll help you shape it into a viable research project.

Nuts and Bolts

- The final paper counts for 25% of your overall course grade.
- Please format your essay according to the MLA formatting guidelines in the Course Reader.
- You will have more success in your research and your writing if you **NARROW** your project effectively. It is ok to begin with a big topic, but you have to find a very specific, clearly defined niche in which to make a point. Mini-papers 5 and 6 should aid you in narrowing and specifying your claim.

Remember that the research process is frustrating *and* exciting, often at the same time; it can stump you, lead you in directions you didn't expect (or didn't think that you were interested in!), and yield exciting discoveries. **Don't hesitate to ask for help at any stage, and pursue your research questions with vigor and perseverance!**