

Checklist for Preparing to Write Final Papers

Close-Reading / Textual Analysis of Primary Text(s)

- Find good print copy of primary text(s)
- Check notes from previous reading for pertinent passages
- Reread text(s) & flag useful passages and their page numbers to use in final paper
- Transcribe passages you plan on using for final paper in Word doc
- Organize passages that can be grouped together in Word doc
- Write 2-4 sentences of close-reading or analysis for each passage collected
- Synthesize primary source passages with your analysis

Evaluate Thesis Statement

- Type out thesis in full at top of a Word document
- Highlight keywords or terms from thesis you plan on using, if applicable
- Define keywords or terms in 1 to 2 sentences for your introduction, if applicable
- Does this thesis *focus* on a literary interpretation?
 - Do you avoid making an overly historical interpretation, such as “through ____ Dickens shows us that the French Revolution was _____”?
- Does this thesis avoid evaluative statements?
 - i.e. Do you avoid saying “the author makes the experience of ____ seem realistic” or “the author successfully makes the audience feel sympathy for X or Y”?
- Does this thesis avoid discussing your personal evaluations?
 - i.e. Do you avoid saying whether you enjoyed the text?

Mentor/Advisor Consultation (*by email or in person*)

- Consult with Professor Yan on thesis
- Consult with Professor Yan on what kind of historical, literary critical, or theoretical texts you will need for your paper

Literature Review of Secondary Materials and Other Resources

- Approach librarian at reference desk of Library West for help in finding resources on your topic
 - Make sure to bring your syllabus, assignment, and prepare a short few sentences about what your topic is to help them guide their search
- Conduct library database search for relevant books, book chapters, and academic articles
- Conduct library database search for relevant primary resources
 - such as collections of letters, reviews of the text, essays by author, or other primary biographical or historical documents
- Collect secondary materials and other resources from library and online databases
- Read through sources and highlight passages of note
- Transcribe passages and citation information of resources you plan to use in Word doc
- Organize passages and citations that go together by grouping them in Word doc
- Write out 2-4 sentences of analysis per passage or group of passages
- Synthesize secondary sources with analysis sentences you have written for these sources

Argument Organization

- Make list of sub-arguments you need to prove on your way to proving your thesis
 - Use these sub-arguments to determine what your paragraphs will be; that is, where you will make turns in argument and what kinds of sections you will need in your paper
- Determine where close-readings will fit as evidence within each sub-argument
- Determine where secondary and other sources will fit within each sub-argument
- Organize sub-arguments and evidence into an outline