

## **Research Presentation and Paper**

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**Introduction:** These assignments can be used in face-to-face, online synchronous, and online asynchronous learning modalities. They are designed for 100- and 200-level general education literature courses but could be adapted for upper-level courses.

### **Sample learning goals with which the research project can be aligned:**

1. Demonstrate mastery of [insert type of literature on which course is focusing].
2. Demonstrate mastery of critical reading, thinking, writing, and research skills to analyze literature.
3. Demonstrate mastery of intersectionality, with a particular focus on antiracism, as it applies to writing on [insert course topic].

**Assessment:** The grading rubrics are included at the end of each assignment description.

### **Assignment Descriptions:**

#### **Research Presentation:**

[insert student sample presentation]

[insert presentation schedule]

**Worth:** 175 points or 17.5% of grade

**Length:** 7 minutes

**Due date:** Day you sign up for on sign-up sheet

- During the first week of class, you will sign up for an individual presentation on one of the literary works we will be reading as well as one of “Perspectives” sections from our textbook, which provide important historical and cultural information on the time periods and regions that we’ll be studying.
- Then you will create and give a **7-minute oral research presentation** to the class on that literary work and its social context.
- You will bring your project before our classroom audience in the form of an **oral presentation with a visual component**, i.e., a **“visual/verbal” medium** (a speech with a visual aid such as a handout, flyer, brochure, pamphlet, poster, narrated video, webpage, PowerPoint presentation, etc.).
- In addition to the literary work and the section you read from the textbook, you will also be required to search for, select, cite, and use **2 credible research sources** from the **library’s online databases and/or library catalog** in your presentation. Your presentation should also include a **map** of the geographic area(s) that you’re discussing, **image(s)**, and a **video** clip from the *Films on Demand* library database or an appropriate *YouTube* clip that you cite in **MLA Style** in your **Works Cited**.
- Also, your presentation should relate the material you found in your research to the literary work(s) that we read for the day you’re presenting.
- Please see topic sign-up for specific details on what you’re researching and reading.

**Purpose of assignment:**

- To promote the understanding of some of the social, political, and cultural factors which have contributed to the shaping of the literature
- To stress the value of being able to pick out main ideas from a reading selection; to summarize them in one's own words in the presentation; to analyze them in the paper; and to cite them correctly in MLA documentation style in both the presentation and paper
- To highlight the higher order concerns of composition (focus, organization, coherence, development)
- To emphasize the importance of considering one's audience (in this case, one's classmates) and one's genre/medium (oral speech with visual component)
- To give each student the opportunity to share their newly acquired knowledge with their classmates (which is intended to add to the interest of the class; to help students to recognize the importance of every individual's contributions to class discussion; and to foster a sense of community in the class)
- To underline the importance of finding, evaluating, incorporating, and citing library sources

**Evaluation criteria:** I will be looking for the following in your presentation:

- Demonstrated understanding of the reading assignment from textbook and the library sources you read
- Demonstrated understanding of library research strategies: finding, evaluating, citing, and using text, image, and/or video sources
- Consideration of audience (your classmates)
- Consideration of your genre/medium (oral presentation with visual)
- Clear focus and thesis
- Development of thesis: support of thesis through use of details, examples, etc. (appropriate to genre/medium--oral presentation with visual)
- Organization and coherence (whole & parts have purpose & move in logical order with clear transitions)
- Correct research citations
- Sound sentence structure, grammar, and mechanics

**Please refer to the grading rubric for this assignment.**

**Tip on Research:**

- Keep in mind that you are researching a new culture, so you may need to do some background Googling on the general web before you begin your library research in order to determine the different ways in which the author's name and the titles of the literary work are translated into English as well as the different words that are used to refer to the particular cultural concept which you are researching.

**Finding Library Sources:** [Insert link to library homepage here]

[insert video on using the campus library for this assignment and/or notes from the classroom information literacy lesson]

**Databases:** [insert directions for accessing them]

- A library database that you will find helpful is *Credo Reference*. It contains library-vetted credible encyclopedia articles on a variety of topics. It also houses a mind map keyword search tool, maps, images, and citations for all of its sources.

**Library’s Catalog:**

The library’s catalog will allow you to search for all sources available in the library or online. It is located [insert link here]

**What you need to cite in your presentation:**

- **Exact words, phrases, sentences NEED TO BE IN QUOTES & HAVE AUTHOR & PAGE NOS. IN PARENTHESES ( ) AFTER MATERIAL**
- **Material summarized in your own words from sources NEED TO HAVE AUTHOR & PAGE NOS. IN PARENTHESIS ( ) AFTER MATERIAL**
- Cite all sources (including images and videos) on Works Cited page

**Summarizing or paraphrasing is...**

Putting original writer’s argument into your own words

- Be careful to avoid original writer’s words, grammatical structure, & syntax
- When quoting, copy words exactly and do not use them out of context

**Quoting**

- Direct quotation should be used when you can’t say it better, but beware of mixing your voice and style with that of the other writer.
- Avoid too much quotation from your library research, especially long quotations; instead, opt for more paraphrasing. Do, however, provide a lot of quotations from the literary text to illustrate your points. Be sure to interpret/analyze everything that you quote.
- Use tags to identify whose idea it is: Equiano says, (Equiano 4), According to Fezzey, etc.
- If you formally introduce quotation, use a colon:
- If your quotation is part of the sentence, use a comma or no punctuation

**3 Types of Quotations**

1. **Quotation of single words**—used to indicate exact terms
2. **Brief quotation**—to quote source on a specific point; less than 4 lines  
Ex: “-----” (Equiano 1).

1. **Block quotation**—more than 4 lines  
Ex. Equiano says:  
-----  
----- (2)

**Plagiarism:**

- Borrowing without giving source or proper citation
- Borrowing language without quotations

**More tips for citing:**

- Cite your research from the textbook and from the library within the body of the presentation and in a Works Cited or bibliography slide using **MLA** style of documentation.

- Use quotation marks around the titles of short poems and stories and italicize book and play titles.

### **Some notes on plagiarism and citing research**

[insert tips here]

#### **Citing the works you're using from our textbook**

[insert sample citation]

[Please reference Purdue OWL's MLA Guide citing in MLA](#) for citing your library sources

### **Research Presentation Rubric**

#### **Criterion 1: Demonstrated understanding of the reading assignment from textbook and library sources**

- Highly Proficient: Addresses all major ideas in texts in a way that shows sophisticated understanding
- Proficient: Addresses all major ideas in texts in way that shows understanding
- Developing: Shows understanding but not full comprehension
- Emerging: Addresses elements of texts but is incomplete
- Insufficient: Response is minimal, disorganized, or unsuited to texts

#### **Criterion 2: Demonstrated understanding of library research strategies: finding, evaluating, citing, and using text, image, and/or video sources**

- Highly Proficient: Uses library catalog and/or databases skillfully; Uses credible library sources; Evidence is smoothly integrated; Documentation follows MLA format
- Proficient: Uses library catalog and/or databases efficiently; Uses credible library sources; Evidence is smoothly integrated; Documentation follows MLA format Generally chooses and uses research tools well;
- Developing: Uses credible library sources; Generally, evidence is smoothly integrated; Documentation follows MLA format with some minor errors
- Emerging: Has some difficulty planning research and finding appropriate sources; Evidence may be unevenly integrated; Documentation follows MLA format with some errors
- Insufficient: Random search for sources; Uses inappropriate sources; Evidence is poorly integrated; Errors in documentation reveal lack of awareness of MLA format

#### **Criterion 3: Consideration of audience (classmates)**

- Highly Proficient: Addresses audience in engaging manner
- Proficient: Addresses audience appropriately
- Developing: Occasionally addresses audience inappropriately
- Emerging: Little sense of audience
- Insufficient: Does not address targeted audience

#### **Criterion 4: Clear focus and thesis**

- Highly Proficient: Central focus/thesis is clear and complex
- Proficient: Central focus/thesis is clear

- Developing: Central focus/thesis is ill-defined but perceivable
- Emerging: Central focus/thesis may lack clarity
- Insufficient: No central focus/thesis

**Criterion 5: Development of thesis appropriate to oral presentation with visual**

- Highly Proficient: Addresses thesis and all major supporting ideas with an appropriate level of detail accurately
- Proficient: Addresses thesis and some supporting ideas with an appropriate level of detail accurately
- Developing: Addresses thesis but blurs supporting ideas and peripheral information Emerging: Addresses some ideas but does not distinguish thesis, support, and peripheral ideas
- Insufficient: Addresses ideas insufficiently

**Criterion 6: Organization and coherence**

- Highly Proficient: Unified sections that intricately develop focus; Smooth transitions between ideas
- Proficient: Unified sections that effectively develop focus; Smooth transitions between ideas
- Emerging: Generally unified sections with occasional gaps in logic; Some weak transitions
- Developing: Disjointed or confusing presentation of ideas within sections; Transitions may be missing
- Insufficient: Unclear organization; No transitions

**Criterion 7: Sound sentence structure, grammar, and mechanics** (I suggest making this a very small percentage of the grade)

- Highly Proficient: No errors in grammar or mechanics
- Proficient: Few errors in grammar or mechanics
- Developing: Errors in grammar or mechanics
- Emerging: Incomplete editing and proofreading
- Insufficient: Frequent errors impede meaning

**Research Paper:**

[insert student sample research paper here]

**Worth:** 200 points or 20% of grade

**Length:** 3-5 pages (plus Works Cited page)

- You will write a **research paper (3-5 pages)** about the topic and literary work on which you presented in which you cite the **two credible library research** sources you cited in your presentation.
- Based on the information you have gathered for your presentation, your paper should analyze **significant passages** from the literary work based on your interpretation of the relevant **literary elements** (form, language, imagery, symbolism, theme, etc.), **author's life and intersectional identity**, and **social context** (historical, cultural, biographical factors you found in your **research in the textbook and library sources** that you cited in your presentation).
- For this paper you will answer the following questions about the literary work based on the information you have gathered for your presentation:
- What historical, biographical, cultural factors are important to this literary work?

- How is the literary text influenced by historical, cultural, biographical, or other contextual factors?
- How would you interpret the literature in the light of these contextual factors? In other words, how do these factors affect or enrich your reading and interpretation of the work?

**The focus of the paper** should be your interpretation of important passages from the literary work in light of the material from the textbook and your library research that you've read. Here is a brief outline of how you might go about structuring your paper:

**Introduction:** Introduce your topic and state your thesis (your interpretation of the work).

**Body:** Support your thesis by showing textual evidence (specific examples/details from the work and close readings of key passages from the literary work that you quote from and analyze) and evidence from the textbook's section and your library research that you read for the presentation.

**Conclusion:** In summing up your main points, avoid just restating your thesis. Provide some insight for your readers, leave them with something to think about, put the issue into a larger context, and/or discuss the implications of your argument.

In preparing your paper, I encourage you to write at least **2 drafts of your essay**: a workshop draft to be critiqued by your classmates, the Writing Center, and/or me and the final paper which I will grade.

**Please refer to the grading rubric for this assignment.**

### Classical Argument Structure

- Attention grabber
- Introduction to author(s) and literary work(s) and explanation of topic and needed background information
- *\*Thesis: claim with reasons*
- Forecasting passage
- *\*Presentation and support of each reason*
- Summary of argument
- Strong last impression

### Formulating a Thesis

- Issue/Topic: names the subject area
- Turn your issue into a claim
- Claim/Thesis: adds a comment about the subject and turns it into something debatable

### Guidelines for a Thesis Statement

- Clear and specific
- Of interest and import to others
- Debatable
- Original
- **Helpful way to structure thesis when getting started:** main claim and reasons linked by "because clause"
- Reason—claim used to support another claim

- Usually linked to claim with connecting words—because, since, for, so, thus, consequently, therefore

### **All Evidence Comes from 1 of 3 Sources:**

- Text itself (Incorporating quotations from literature as evidence)
- Other people's ideas (Incorporating library research as evidence)
- Your own thoughts (Foreground your argument)

### **Development of Your Ideas through Literary analysis**

- Summarize to demonstrate your understanding
- Analyze to demonstrate your critical thinking

### **Summary**

- looks at *what* a text says

### **Analysis**

- looks at *how* a text makes its point

**It's not enough to SAY a certain piece of literature says or means a certain thing  
You will need to SHOW it**

**By summarizing, paraphrasing, or quoting the literature itself and analyzing it.**

### **Analyze**

- **Form/genre:** type of literature; if poem, type of poem
- **Tone:** attitude toward the subject and/or audience
- **Speaker of poem/Narrator of prose**

**Language**—word choice (words used, arrangement of words, language patterns, etc.)

**Literal language**—form of language in which writers and speakers mean exactly what their words denote

**Figurative language**—form of language use in which writers and speakers convey something other than the literal meaning of their words

### **Figures of speech**

- **Metaphor:** treats something as if it were something else
- **Simile:** a metaphor stating the comparison by use of like, as, or as if
- **Personification:** human characteristics are bestowed upon anything nonhuman
- **Apostrophe:** when speaker directly addresses a person, thing, or idea, etc.

**Style**—the way an author chooses words, arranges them in sentences or in lines of dialogue, and develops ideas and actions with description, imagery, and other literary techniques

### **Symbolism and Imagery**

- **Symbol**—something that is itself and also stands for something else
- **Image**—a concrete representation of a sense impression, a feeling, or an idea

### **Theme**

- central idea of the story
- goes beyond fiction and applies to the real world

### **Additional tips for writing about literature:**

- Don't assume that your readers will remember (or consider important) the same ideas or incidents in the literature that you do
- Don't retell the plot or text at length
- Don't assume that quotations or summaries are self-sufficient and prove your point automatically
- It is customary to use the present tense

### Tips for quoting literature

- Use the shortest quotation you can while still making your point
- Never assume a quotation is self-explanatory
- If you are quoting a character, be sure to distinguish that character from the author

### Ways to/Reasons for Incorporating Library Research into Your Paper

- To see how your own ideas are like and unlike those of other readers
- To have your attention drawn to parts or aspects of the work whose significance you haven't recognized and to begin to imagine new ways of reading a text
- To learn where the literary conversation about an author or work stands
- To discover new ways of constructing a literary argument, refuting earlier positions, offering counterarguments, and using explanation, elaboration, and evidence effectively
- To gain a better understanding of the background or cultural or literary tradition of a work
- The first time you mention an author, use his or her full name, and then his or her last name thereafter

### Highlighting Your Own Thoughts in Your Paper

- Most important source of support
- Your paper is yours and as such should reflect YOUR thinking
- The most indispensable source of material for your paper is your own mind
- Your own thoughts and words should always carry the heaviest weight in any paper you write

### Organizing Your Paper

- Cluster similar ideas into groups under headings
- Figure out basic structure of essay
- Then create a sequence of paragraphs
- Each paragraph should contain 1 main idea and sufficient evidence and explanation to support that idea
- When added together, paragraph-level ideas lead reader to your paper's ultimate point—your thesis

### What you need to cite in your presentation and paper

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- **Material summarized in your own words from sources NEED TO HAVE AUTHOR & PAGE NOS. IN PARENTHESIS ( ) AFTER MATERIAL**
- Cite all sources on Works Cited page

### Summarizing or paraphrasing is...

Putting original writer's argument into your own words

- Be careful to avoid original writer's words, grammatical structure, & syntax
- When quoting, copy words exactly and do not use them out of context

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- Direct quotation should be used when you can't say it better, but beware of mixing your voice and style with that of the other writer.
- Avoid too much quotation from your library research, especially long quotations; instead, opt for more paraphrasing. Do, however, provide a lot of quotations from



the literary text to illustrate your points. Be sure to interpret/analyze everything that you quote.

- Use tags to identify whose idea it is: Harjo says, (Harjo 4), According to Harjo, etc.
- If you formally introduce quotation, use a colon :
- If your quotation is part of the sentence, use a comma or no punctuation

### **3 Types of Quotations**

- **Quotation of single words**—used to indicate exact terms
- **Brief quotation**—to quote source on a specific point; less than 4 lines  
Ex: “-----” (Harjo 1).

- **Block quotation**—more than 4 lines

Ex. Harjo says:

-----  
----- (2)

### **[Purdue OWL's Guide to Quoting and Citing Verse in MLA](#)**

#### **Tips on avoiding plagiarism and citing**

[insert tips here]

#### **Citing the work(s) you're using from our textbook**

- **Include the textbook you're using, as cited below, in your Works Cited page:**

[insert textbook citation here]

- Or, cite the online text if you're using one:

Author's Last Name, Author's First Name. Title of Work (short poems and stories in """; long poems and books in italics). Website in italics. URL. Accessed: day month year.

**Please reference [Purdue OWL's MLA Guide citing in MLA](#) for how to cite your library sources**

**Also check out [Purdue OWL's Guide to "Writing in Literature"](#)**

#### **Research Paper Grading Rubric:**

##### **Criterion 1: Analysis and Interpretation**

- **Highly Proficient:** Demonstrates sophisticated understanding and interpretation of literary work; Develops and synthesizes substantive ideas; Shows complex engagement with contextual framework that was researched
- **Proficient:** Demonstrates thorough understanding and interpretation of literary work; Engages with contextual framework that was researched
- **Developing:** Demonstrates adequate understanding of literary work, but uneven ability to shape interpretation; Intelligent but conventional interpretation; Engages with contextual framework that was researched
- **Emerging:** Shows superficial understanding of literary work; Doesn't move beyond simple summary and description; Incomplete or weak interpretation; Attempts to engage with contextual framework that was researched

- Insufficient: Responds to the literary work and contextual framework that was researched in minimal fashion that is incomplete

**Criterion 2: Focus and Thesis**

- Highly Proficient: Central focus/thesis is clear, compelling, original, and complex; Explicitly and fully addresses the assignment
- Proficient: Central focus/thesis is clear; Fully addresses the assignment
- Developing: Central focus/thesis is ill-defined but perceivable; Fully addresses assignment but may be oblique in focus
- Emerging: Central focus/thesis may lack clarity; Only partially addresses assignment
- Insufficient: No central focus/thesis

**Criterion 3: Evidence and Documentation**

- Highly Proficient: Thesis and ideas are consistently supported by skillfully selected, persuasive evidence; Evidence is smoothly integrated into discussion; Evidence is presented in detailed, compelling manner; Sources are used with academic integrity; Documentation follows MLA format
- Proficient: Thesis and ideas are consistently supported by well-chosen evidence; Evidence is smoothly integrated into discussion; Evidence is presented with an appropriate level of detail; Sources are used with academic integrity; Documentation follows MLA format
- Developing: Thesis and ideas are generally supported, but there may be gaps; Evidence may be unevenly integrated into argument; Evidence may be occasionally too general or too specific; Sources are used with academic integrity; Documentation follows MLA format with some minor errors
- Emerging: Evidence is thin or inappropriate; Evidence is poorly integrated (lacks signal phrases and follow-up); Evidence is often too general or too specific; Documentation follows MLA format with some errors
- Insufficient: Evidence is minimal or absent; Errors in documentation reveal lack of awareness of MLA format

**Criterion 4: Organization and coherence**

- Highly Proficient: Unified sections that intricately develop focus; Smooth transitions between ideas
- Proficient: Unified sections that effectively develop focus; Smooth transitions between ideas
- Developing: Generally unified sections with occasional gaps in logic; Some weak transitions
- Emerging: Disjointed or confusing presentation of ideas within sections; Transitions may be missing
- Insufficient: Unclear organization; No transitions

**Criterion 5: Sound sentence structure, grammar, and mechanics** (I suggest making this a very small percentage of the grade)

- Highly Proficient: No errors in grammar or mechanics
- Proficient: Few errors in grammar or mechanics
- Developing: Errors in grammar or mechanics
- Emerging: Incomplete editing and proofreading
- Insufficient: Frequent errors impede meaning

Hilary Fezzey is a Professor of English at the University of Wisconsin-Superior, where she teaches courses in British and world literature and literary theory in the Department of Writing, Language, and Literature. She received her B.A. from Northern Michigan University and her M.A. and Ph.D. from Purdue University. She has essays in *Re-viewing Thomas Holcroft*; *the Adam Smith Review*; and *Big Picture Pedagogy*.