

## Research Project with Archival and Scholarly Sources

Hilary Fezzey, University of Wisconsin-Superior

**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. This assignment was designed in conjunction with Stephanie Warden's "Decolonizing Library Instruction Pedagogy Lesson"

### 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.

### Research Paper Proposal and Annotated Bibliography

\*I am indebted to my teaching mentors while I was a graduate teaching assistant at Purdue University, Dr. Shirley K. Rose and Dr. Karen Kopelson, for the template for the proposal and annotated bibliography assignment

Worth: 175 points or 17.5% of grade

Length: 2 pages

- In preparing your papers, I encourage you to write **at least 2 drafts of your essays:** a workshop draft to be critiqued by a classmate and me (and possibly the Writing Center) and the final paper which I will grade.
- This assignment should be **typed, double-spaced, with 1" margins, and cited in MLA style.**

[insert link to student sample proposal and annotated bibliography here]

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

### Research Paper Proposal:

- Your research paper proposal will describe the topic you will explore in **1 literary work from the course.**
- The following information will help me to learn what and how you are thinking about researching and writing for your research project.
- Please note that this proposal is *not* a contract; in other words, what you write here does not "lock you into" any set agenda for the research project (though, of course, the sooner you can firm up your ideas for and approaches to research, the better).

### Research Paper Proposal:

- Please number and respond to the following questions with detailed, specific answers in typed, complete sentences.
- **Length: 1 page**
  1. What is the topic and literary work that you've chosen to explore for this project?
  2. How did you invent/come up with your topic for this paper?
  3. Why is your topic of interest and importance to you?
  4. What do you perceive to be the primary purpose of your paper?
  5. Describe your research strategies: Please begin your research for your scholarly source on the *MLA International Bibliography* database and your research for your archival source on one of the archival databases on the library's website. Which search terms did you use? Which topics did you find that scholars have written about concerning the literary work you're researching? Which types of archival sources did you find, and on which topics? **Be sure to choose an article or book chapter that is at least 12 pages.**

### Annotated Bibliography:

- For your annotated bibliography, you will read, summarize, and analyze **1 source (an online scholarly journal article from our library's database or an e-book chapter from an e-book on the library's database that is at least 12 pages)**. You will also **search for, select, cite, and use 1 online archival text from one of the library's online archival databases** (such as *American Indian Histories and Culture*, *The Gerritsen Collection*, *British and Irish Women's Letters and Diaries*, *Women and Social Movements in the United States, 1600-2000*).
- **What is it?** An annotated bibliography is just what its name suggests; it is a list of sources you are using for your research project that provides "notes" about those sources.
- **How to do it:** To complete your annotated bibliography, list your sources as you would for any works cited page (i.e., alphabetically by author and in correct MLA format).
- **First** summarize the scholarly source in a paragraph. **Length: approximately 200 words**
- **Second**, explain how/why, and even where in your paper you anticipate that source being useful to you. **Length: approximately 50 words.**
- **Third**, briefly summarize the archival text. **Length: approximately 50 words**
- **Fourth**, explain how/why, and even where in your paper you anticipate that source being useful to you. **Length: approximately 50 words.**

### 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]

**Please see Stephanie Warden’s “Decolonizing Library Instruction Pedagogy Lesson”**

**Scholarly Sources:**

- Written by an expert in the field (has a terminal degree in the field)
- Peer-reviewed by experts in the field (also have a terminal degree in the field)
- Original research

**Databases:**

- Databases will help you locate online journal articles. Some of these will be full text (the entire article will be available), while some databases provide only abstracts (a short summary of the article).
- You can also click the “Find It” button to see if another database has the full text of the article.

**The premier library database for literature that you should consult is:**

- ***MLA International Bibliography Database***
- To access, go to [insert directions for accessing it here]

**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]

**Archival Sources Research** (primary sources written by or about an author or about a social issue during their time period): [insert link and directions for accessing]

- *American Indian Histories and Culture* database
- *Artemis Primary Sources (Gale)* database (contains *17<sup>th</sup>- and 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Burney Collection, British Library Newspapers, Nineteenth Century U.S. Newspapers, The Times Digital Archive, 1785-1985, Eighteenth Century Collections Online, Nineteenth-Century Collections Online*)
- *British and Irish Women’s Letters and Diaries* database
- *Early Encounters in North America: Peoples, Cultures, and the Environment* database
- *North American Women’s Letters and Diaries* database
- *Women and Social Movements in the United States, 1600-2000* database
- *Women’s History Online—Gerritsen Collection*

**Please reference Purdue OWL’s MLA Guide citing in MLA**

**Grading Rubric for Research Paper Proposal and Annotated Bibliography:**

**Criterion 1: Clear topic, literary work, and purpose in proposal**

- Highly Proficient: Topic, literary work, and purpose are clear and complex
- Proficient: Topic, literary work, and purpose are clear
- Developing: Topic, literary work, and purpose lack clarity
- Emerging: Topic, literary work, and purpose are incomplete
- Insufficient: Topic, literary work, and/or purpose are absent

**Criterion 2: Demonstrated understanding of library research strategies and finding and evaluating scholarly and archival sources in proposal and annotated bibliography**

- Highly Proficient: Uses library catalog and/or databases skillfully; Uses scholarly library source; Uses archival library source
- Proficient: Uses library catalog and/or databases efficiently; Uses scholarly library source; Uses archival library source
- Developing: Generally, chooses and uses research tools well; Uses scholarly library source; Uses archival library source
- Emerging: Has some difficulty planning research and finding appropriate sources; Uses credible, not necessarily scholarly, library source; Does not necessarily use archival library source
- Insufficient: Random search for source; Uses inappropriate source

**Criterion 3: Demonstrated understanding of citing scholarly sources in MLA format in annotated bibliography**

- Highly Proficient: Documentation follows MLA format with no errors
- Proficient: Documentation follows MLA format with very minor surface errors
- Developing: Documentation follows MLA format with some errors
- Emerging: Documentation follows MLA format with errors
- Insufficient: Errors in documentation reveal lack of awareness of MLA format

**Criterion 4: Evaluation of how library sources will be used for research paper in annotated bibliography**

- Highly Proficient: Thoroughly and thoughtfully anticipates how sources will be useful
- Proficient: Clearly anticipates how sources will be useful
- Developing: Somewhat anticipates how sources will be useful
- Emerging: Doesn't fully anticipate how sources will be useful
- Insufficient: Does not anticipate how sources will be useful

**Criterion 5: Demonstrated understanding of summarizing main ideas of research sources in annotated bibliography**

- Highly Proficient: Summarizes main ideas in student's own words eloquently; Addresses thesis and all major supporting ideas with an appropriate level of detail accurately; Uses attributive tags smoothly
- Proficient: Summarizes main ideas generally in student's own words; Addresses thesis and some supporting ideas with an appropriate level of detail accurately; Uses attributive tags
- Developing: Summarizes main ideas but not consistently in student's own words; Addresses thesis but blurs supporting ideas and peripheral information; Generally, uses attributive tags
- Emerging: Summarizes source using exact language of text; Addresses some ideas but does not distinguish thesis, support, and peripheral ideas; Uses attributive tags inconsistently
- Insufficient: States ideas using exact language of the text without attribution in minimal fashion that is incomplete; Addresses ideas insufficiently

**Criterion 6: 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 that you described in your research proposal.
- 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 (1 scholarly and 1 archival)** that you summarized in your annotated bibliography).
- 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 annotated bibliography.

**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 an evaluation draft 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**

- **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 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: 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 Poetry in MLA](#)**

**Plagiarism**

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

**More tips for writing paper:**

- Write to an audience that has read the work. In doing so, analyze the work rather than summarize it. In other words, you do not need to provide a plot summary of the text.
- Cite your research from the textbook and from the library within the body of the paper and in a Works Cited or bibliography 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:**

- Plagiarism is borrowing without providing the source or proper citation and borrowing language without quotations.
- In paraphrasing or summarizing, be careful to avoid using the original writer's words, grammatical structure, and syntax.
- Direct quotation from the textbook and your library source should be used when you can't say it better, but beware of mixing your voice and style with that of the other writer.
- When quoting, copy words exactly and do not use them out of context.
- Avoid too much quotation from your textbook and library source, 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.

**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](#)**

**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*.