

'I' in this paper, but this may *not* be a personal essay. Avoid 'telling the story' of your reading and writing of the assignment.

- ☑ It must be evident to your reader that you have diligently undertaken the research and writing *process*, including the multiple steps, drafts and revisions this requires. Don't save this paper to the last minute. *Please, don't.* Keep up with the periodic due dates so that I can offer you the feedback you need to succeed.

Topics:

- ☑ The work you research may be as long as a novel or compact as three to five poems. You may be able to expand one of your shorter essay assignments into the research paper—talk to me if this option appeals to you.
- ☑ Your thesis will probably not be earth-shattering or uncover some secret hidden meaning no one has ever thought of before. It will, however, evidence your close, critical reading of the text and give voice to your unique perspective, thus adding valuably to the academic conversation.
- ☑ Start with a topic (the text + questions about it) and write a bit to discover your thesis. Revise your thesis as you go, if necessary. Consider all the elements of fiction, poetry and drama we are discussing in class: language, figurative speech (metaphor, symbol, irony...), point of view, characterization, setting, plot, sequencing, meter, rhyme, themes, motifs, social and historical contexts, etc.
- ☑ Seven to eight pages may seem like an unimaginable number of words and ideas for you to come up with, but if you stay focused and really keep your head in the text, you'll really be okay. It's tempting to make your topic broad or overly complicated, with many aspects, so you don't run out of things to write about. However, the better papers tend to be those that focus narrowly and pile on the specific evidence. Aim for 'depth' not 'breadth,' as the adage goes.

