

LIT 350: Final Project Guidelines and Grading Guide

Overview

The final project is the creation of a research paper (at least 5–7 pages) on a historical, social, or cultural topic relevant to the black literary tradition. In addition to providing a close analytical reading of one of the assigned texts, students will be expected to incorporate secondary source analysis in their writing to develop and strengthen their argument. The project is divided into **three milestones**, which are designed to encourage students to visualize the substantial time requirement that writing a research-based paper requires. These milestones will be submitted in **Modules Four, Five/ Six, and Seven**.

Guidelines

Students will complete a research paper based on one of the African American periods discussed in the first four weeks of the term and provide a close reading of at least one of the primary texts assigned; additionally, the paper will incorporate the use of at least two additional secondary sources.

Topic Proposal/Thesis Creation

- Students will submit a topic proposal and thesis statement. A student may choose to examine any historical, social, or cultural topic raised in the assigned readings for the course, including any topic previously addressed in a journal or response paper.

Rough Draft/Peer Review

- The rough draft should be at a stage ready for thoughtful peer review. For example, your writing should be free of careless typographical errors, and your in-text documentation should be in place. Do not consider your rough draft to be a “first draft”; rather, consider it to be a draft that is close to being “final,” but one that would benefit from feedback before you go back to make final revisions.

Final Research Paper

- The final paper should demonstrate that you have given careful consideration to the review comments made by your classmates on your rough draft. The final paper represents the student’s best effort to provide a close reading of relevant literary text(s), incorporate the use of secondary analysis, and fulfill the promise of the thesis.

Milestones

Milestone One: Topic Proposal/Thesis Creation

In **task 4-2**, you will develop your topic proposal and working thesis for the final paper assignment. Your proposal need only be 1–2 pages in length, but it should include sufficient specificity and detail to show that you have given some thought to your ideas. Demonstrate that you have command over primary source materials as well as any secondary source materials you plan to utilize. Your task this week is to select and grow a topic inspired by the class readings and class discussions. Keep in mind that your thesis statement should be as clearly and concisely worded as possible, and both your proposal and thesis should plainly identify which work or works you plan to analyze and for what purpose. This milestone assignment must be supported with in-text documentation, and it will

include citations. Students should follow MLA formatting guidelines. **This is shared in a discussion topic and is graded using the Topic Selection Rubric.** You may use the feedback provided by your peers to make revisions to your topic as you see fit.

Milestone Two: Rough Draft and the Peer Review

For **task 5-3**, you will complete the first draft of your final paper. Post a copy of your draft by the end of Module Five to the designated discussion topic for peer review in Module Six. **Your rough draft is not graded in Module Five, but it MUST be submitted to 6-2 Discussion by the end of Module Five so that you are ready for the peer review at the beginning of Module Six.**

In **task 6-2**, you will critique two rough drafts of your peers. Select a draft that has not yet been reviewed. If they have all been reviewed, select a draft with the lowest number of reviews. **This will be graded separately using the Peer Review Guidelines and Rubric document.** Review this document in the Assignment Guidelines and Rubrics folder for additional details.

Milestone Three: Final Research Paper

For **task 7-2**, carefully review the peer review comments made by your classmates last week. After giving your paper one last revision and edit, submit your final draft. **This is graded separately using the Final Project Rubric.**

Final Project Rubric

Requirements of submission: Written components of projects must follow these formatting guidelines when applicable: double spacing, 12-point Times New Roman font, one-inch margins, and citations in MLA format. Your final essay should be at least 5–7 pages in length (not counting your title page or Works Cited pages). *Failure to adhere to these requirements of submission will result in the paper not being graded.*

Critical Elements	Distinguished (100%)	Proficient (85%)	Emerging (55%)	Not Evident (0%)	Value
Analysis	Constructs a critical position that clearly shows the complex relationship between black literary tradition and its historical, social, and cultural context	Constructs a critical position that mostly shows the complex relationship between black literary tradition and its historical, social, and cultural context	Attempts to construct a critical position that shows the complex relationship between black literary tradition and its historical, social, and cultural context	Does not construct a critical position that shows the complex relationship between black literary tradition and its historical, social, and cultural context	25
Interpretation	Constructs sophisticated arguments that accurately demonstrate the application of close reading strategies (formal literary techniques)	Constructs arguments that accurately demonstrate the application of close reading strategies (formal literary techniques)	Attempts to construct arguments that accurately demonstrate the application of close reading strategies (formal literary techniques)	Does not construct arguments that accurately demonstrate the application of close reading strategies (formal literary techniques)	25
Evidence	Integrates effective primary and secondary sources to support thesis	Integrates sufficient primary and secondary sources to support thesis	Incorporates some primary and secondary sources, but not all evidence supports thesis or additional evidence is needed	Does not incorporate appropriate primary and secondary sources to support thesis	20

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Organization	Contains strong introduction (that identifies topic, context, and clear thesis statement), body, and conclusion	Contains introduction (that identifies topic, context, and thesis statement), body, and conclusion	Contains introduction (that identifies topic, context, and thesis statement), body, and conclusion, but some elements are unclear or incomplete	Missing most of main elements (introduction, topic, context, body, conclusion) and/or is unclear	20
Writing (Mechanics/ Citation)	No errors related to grammar, style, and citation format	Minor errors related to grammar, style, and citation format	Some errors related to grammar, style, and citation format	Major errors related to grammar, style, and citation format	10
Earned Total					100%