Due Dates:
Monday, 24 Jan – In class: Selection of topic texts
Wednesday, 16 Feb – Paper Proposal Due
Wednesday, 6 April – First Draft Due
Final Exam Period – Final Draft Due

Weight: 25%
Your proposal, first draft, and the progression from these steps to your final draft will be included in my determination of the grade for this assignment.

Subject:
On Monday, 24 January, you will have the opportunity to choose one author from our syllabus. The text(s) we read from this author will serve as the primary topic for your paper. A list of your choices appear on the last page of this handout.

There are two caveats. First, no more than two people may choose the same author. The selection process will occur in random order. In order to maximize the likelihood of choosing an author you will enjoy working on, you may wish to take advantage of the days before 24 January to peruse the syllabus and the anthology and find a few options you believe are suitable for you.

Second, while the final draft of your paper is not due until final exam week, the paper proposal and first draft are due earlier in the semester. This means that if you choose an author whom the class will study later in the semester, you may need to read the text on your own within the next two weeks.

Purpose:
As the introduction to your syllabus describes in more detail, we practice several methods of reading and interpreting literary texts in this class. For this paper, you will choose one of those methods and apply it to your essay.

- **Textual Analysis:**
  This method examines textual elements of the work(s) in question and analyzes how those elements contribute to the meaning of the work(s). You might look at a poem’s rhythm and meter, at metaphorical or symbolic language, at literary allusions, tone, mood, etc.
  Sample thesis statement: Achebe’s frequent use of Igbo aphorisms in *Things Fall Apart* emphasizes the fact that the novel is not merely a story of Okonkwo’s life, but is also a compendium of cultural information, tradition, and history.

- **Contextual Analysis:**
  This method involves emphasizing the historical, cultural, or literary contexts which produced the work and in which it is situated. You might find a contextual element which has a clear influence upon the text. You might present the text as, for instance, a work of social criticism.
  Sample thesis statement: The fact that Dorine provides the strongest voice of reason in *Tartuffe* is Molière’s way of criticizing both the strong class divisions that existed in 17th century France and the subordinate role of women in that society.

- **Intertextual analysis:**
  This approach involves looking at the relationship between your author’s work(s) and the works of one or more other writers. A good intertextual reading should involve more than merely declaring that one author has influenced or was influenced by another. Rather, it should attempt to look at the way texts respond to each or attempt to put them in conversation with each other. In other words, if there is a definitive relationship of influence between two or more authors, ask yourself why that influence is an important or significant factor in how you read and interpret the text in question. The answer to that question will help you form your thesis.
  Sample thesis statement: *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* follows in the tradition of Voltaire’s *Candide*. Both texts show a young man searching for his personal paradise, and Douglass’s biographical account emphasizes the value of Voltaire’s fictional narrative.
You may also write a paper that combines two or all of the above methods. This may seem difficult, but if it is done well, it has the potential to produce excellent essays.

**Paper Proposal:**
The proposal, which should be no more than one page (formatted the same as the actual paper, see below), explains the argument you intend to make and how you plan to go about making that argument. You should have a working thesis, and you should describe any preliminary research you’ve done or thoughts you have. At this point, you do not need a full outline or a plan for how your paper will be structured and organized, but the thinking you’ve done so far should lead you to that point.

**Submission Instructions:**
On each of the three days you must turn something in, you must have it printed out and ready to hand in at the beginning of class that day. Be sure your paper is properly formatted, and if it is more than one page (as everything except the proposal will be), be sure the pages are stapled together.

In addition, prior to handing me a hard copy, you must have submitted an electronic copy to me via email: kirsche3@unlv.nevada.edu

When you submit the hard copy of the final paper, you must also hand in printed copies of your rough draft and your proposal.

Late papers will be penalized by one full letter grade for every 24 hours (or portion thereof) that they are late. [THIS IS A REALLY BAD REASON TO EARN A POOR GRADE ON YOUR ESSAY – DON’T LET IT HAPPEN TO YOU!]

**Paper format and other requirements:**
Use standard MLA formatting: 1” margins on all sides, 12 pt. Times New Roman font, proper heading and headers. You can find more information on MLA formatting at the Purdue OWL website: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/

You can also find a properly formatted sample paper here: http://faculty.unlv.edu/kirschen/handouts/writing/SampleFormatting.pdf. Make sure your paper looks like the sample.

Your essay must be a minimum of 1500 words (this is approximately 5 full pages). You must also have a properly formatted Works Cited page, and all quotations in your essay must be followed by correctly formatted parenthetical citations. If you’re not familiar with this process, see the Purdue OWL cite.

Any paper which fails to meet these requirements will earn a failing grade for this assignment.

**Other Useful Pointers:**
- On my website, I have two helpful handouts I strongly recommend you read, called “General Writing Guidelines” and “Using Quotations.” They are available here: http://faculty.unlv.edu/kirschen/handouts/writing.html
  While I refer to the ideas here as “guidelines,” you should consider them firm rules. Deviating from them will likely have a negative effect on your essay grade.
- I study literature, and I’m here to help you. Feel free to set up a meeting with me if you are having difficulty getting started or if you’d like feedback on the quality of your work in progress.
- Also feel free to take advantage of the writing center or your research librarians.
Topic Choices:

Voltaire – *Candide*
Molière – *Tartuffe*
Chikamatsu Monzaemon – *The Love Suicides of Amijima*
William Wordsworth – Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* & any/all poems in your anthology
Samuel Taylor Coleridge – “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner”
William Blake – *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*
Sherman Alexie – “Class” (may also include *Smoke Signals*)
Black Elk – “The Gift of the Sacred Pipe” and “Black Elk’s Vision”
Gerald Vizenor – “The Last Lecture”
Frederick Douglass – *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*
Henrik Ibsen – *A Doll’s House*
James Joyce – *Dubliners*
Chinua Achebe – *Things Fall Apart*
Alifa Ruiyat – “My World of the Unknown”
Gabriel García Márquez – “A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings”