Tips for Essay Writing

\*Your first essay assignment will open after the first week of class.

## Literature

- Remember a good essay shouldn't just be "about" the topic. It should have a focus and a main point (thesis statement).
- An essay should have an introduction paragraph with a thesis statement and several other sentences of introduction. The body of the essay should consist of at least two body paragraphs (three is better) that explain and discuss points related to the topic. A conclusion paragraph summarizes the writer's points and brings the essay to a logical close.
- You shouldn't spend time and energy worrying about word count. You should write the essay, see if it fits the assignment length requirement, and then adapt it as needed.
- If the assignment calls for quotations from the text, these should be arranged in MLA parenthetical format. There is information about this provided with each essay assignment.
- Writing assignments that require support from sources must be accompanied by a Works Cited page.
- Essays will be graded for content and grammar. Proofread, proofread, proofread!!! Your computer's spell and grammar check should not replace doing your own proofreading.
- The Tutorial Center is a valuable resource for essay writing. A tutor will be glad to help you with a rough draft if you get stuck.
- Essays should be headed with your name, the date, and the name of the assignment. The essay itself should have its own title.
- When writing about literature, use the present tense.
- When referring to authors, the first reference should be first and last name and subsequent mentions should be last name only.
- Refer to author and title in the first paragraph.
- Do not put quotes in the introduction or conclusion paragraph. Quotes support your points. Putting a quote in the conclusion makes it a body paragraph, not a conclusion.
- Do not use second person in literary analysis essays. See the following examples.

Incorrect: As you can see, heritage is a prevalent theme in "Everyday Use."

Acceptable, but not ideal: I believe heritage is an important theme of "Everyday Use."

Ideal: Heritage is an important theme in "Everyday Use."

- \*I will assume what you write is your opinion or outlook. You don't need to use "I" to get your point across.
  - Titles of long works (epic poems, novels) are italicized. Titles of short works (lyric poems, short stories) are put in quotation marks.