

## **Final Research Paper**

**Proposal Due:** Tuesday, November 13 by 12:00pm (via Sakai): **25 points**

**Paper Requirements:** 250-500 words, MLA format

**Draft Due:** In class, Tuesday, December 3 (on paper) **15 quiz points**

**Final Draft:** Monday, December 10 by 12:00pm (via Sakai): **175 points**

**Paper Requirements:** 8-10 pages, (2500-3000 words), MLA format, Work Cited page in MLA format with 8 sources (at least 5 academic sources).

**Submission format:** Via Sakai in Word format (.doc/.docx) or as a PDF (.PDF). All papers should have student's last name in the file name (FitzsimmonsClassification.doc) or lose 10% of final grade. No late papers will be accepted.

**Latest Possible Extension Deadline:** December 13, by 5:00pm (for those students who have not yet used their extensions).

**Proposal Instructions:** Students will write a brief prospectus of their upcoming paper, choosing one or more primary texts and a theme or concept that they will explore for their final paper. A good prospectus should include the following:

- Primary fictional text(s) to be researched and explored. If students choose a text not on the syllabus, they should also include a brief synopsis/summary of the plot. (2 points)
- A theme, area of inquiry, or prompt the student plans to work on and details of what that theme/prompt means to them. (5 points)
- Research questions the student hopes to answer (5 points)
- A possible thesis for their essay (5 points)
- At least 2 academic sources that the student believes will be useful to their research, with brief annotations describing what the sources are about and how they will add to the overall paper. (4 points each)

## **Prompts:**

1. **Family:** Our class discussions have often noted how the downfall of society often appears to be linked to the downfall of the family unit, as we know it. Is there only one way to successfully structure a family? Can families take a different shape and still be successful? Is it possible for a dystopia to exist if families remain in tact? Papers based on this prompt may analyze the role of families in dystopian fiction, the politics of family life in American society, or the way YA novels in general reflect families and how that is the same/different in YA dystopian novels.
2. **Gender/Sexuality:** Our class discussions have often revolved around teens, sexuality, gender and gender inequality. Do YA novels pay special attention to these issues because of their audience? How does dystopia typically deal with these issues? Papers based on this prompt may analyze the role of gender/sexuality in one or more texts, discuss the intersection of YA and dystopia when it comes to current trends or discuss the appropriateness of these various discussions for a YA audience. Does YA always deal with sexuality? What role does sexuality play in growing up/coming of age? How do issues of gender/sexuality/inequality become especially important to teens in a dystopia?
3. **Dystopia and politics:** One often pays close attention to the role of government or totalitarian forces when dealing with dystopian literature. How do these themes present themselves in YA dystopian lit and is it different than in dystopian lit aimed at adults? How is the YA audience affected by political questions?

What types of political issues are important or popular with YA audiences and how does YA dystopian lit address (or not address) these issues. Are teens more sensitive to unfair governments? Does a totalitarian government unfairly target teens?

4. **Technology:** Young people and technology are often linked in the popular consciousness. Dystopia and technology are also commonly linked. Papers on this topic might discuss the role of technology in promoting the idea of dystopia, the link between YA audiences and the newest technology, the prospective dangers of technology, the new language/slang created around technology and why so many YA dystopias center around important and/or destructive forms of technology. Can dystopia exist without technology or without problems caused by technology?
5. **Free choice:** students may choose another topic, but will need to make a clear and detailed prospectus of their topic in their proposal paper. The theme and research question areas of the proposal should be especially well developed. Students are encouraged to choose a topic that echoes their interests or major. Free choice topics must be approved by the instructor. Students may choose to run ideas past the instructor during office hours prior to the due date of the proposal.

**Final Paper instructions:** For their final paper, students will write a research paper on the topic of YA lit and dystopia. Students will be required to incorporate a minimum of 8 sources into this paper: up to three of these texts may be fictional/primary texts, while at least 5 of the sources must be academic in nature. Academic sources include the textbook, books, essays from academic collections or articles from peer-reviewed journals. Internet websites may be used in addition to the 5 academic sources, but should not be the student's main mode of research.

For this final assignment, students should expand upon the topic they chose (and had approved) in their proposal. A good paper will advance a clear, strong argument in which the student clearly chooses a side and attempts to persuade the audience that their reading/analysis is correct. Students will engage in original research and should enter into a conversation with those texts in order to reach new and original conclusions. The student's paper should have a clear structure with logical and clear organization. The student's paper should also be generally free of mechanical/spelling errors, should be properly formatted in MLA style, and must include an MLA work-cited page. Please see the grade rubric on the next page for a break-down of points.

Please remember: this paper and proposal are worth 200 points, or 20% of the final grade. Late papers can not be accepted.

## Grade Rubric for Research Paper

Required Elements	Grade Criteria	Points earned
<p>Thesis/ Topic (30%)</p> <p>A/B =53-43 pt C =42-38pts D/E=37-0pts</p>	<p><b><u>A/B level:</u></b> student researches an original, complete and well-reasoned thesis, based on an approved topic. Student’s topic addresses ideas discussed in class, related to their own area of interest and of interest to the scholarly community at large. Thesis is detailed, interesting, clearly explained and thoroughly examined throughout the paper.</p> <p><b><u>C level:</u></b> student’s research is based on a basic premise, with little expansion on previously covered material. Thesis exists, but is bland, uncomplicated or redundant to the class discussion.</p> <p><b><u>D/E level:</u></b> Topic not pre-approved. Student does not explore an original topic, or simply rehashes class discussions, with no new content.</p>	
<p>Research: Quality, Extent, Originality (25%)</p> <p>A/B =43-35 C =34-31 D/E=30-0</p>	<p><b><u>A/B level:</u></b> student thoroughly engages in research, locating academic texts from a variety of peer-reviewed sources. Student reads, responds to and engages with these academic texts in order to produce new ideas or engage scholarly concepts in a new way.</p> <p><b><u>C level:</u></b> Student meets necessary citation requirements, but sources are all similar or concentrated in one part of the student’s argument. Student includes quotes as an after-thought: does not engage in conversation with the texts.</p> <p><b><u>D/E level:</u></b> Academic texts chosen are inappropriate for the paper or missing all together. Student works from own knowledge only, does not read/engage with academic texts at all.</p>	
<p>Argument/ Organization (15%)</p> <p>A/B=27-22 pts C= 21-19pts D/E =18-0</p>	<p><b><u>A/B level:</u></b> Student advances a clear argument. Student has a clear structure for the paper, which supports their argument. Structure follows a logical progression and engages in persuasive techniques to support student argument.</p> <p><b><u>C level:</u></b> Student advances an argument which is sometimes muddled by poor structure. Paragraphs are unfocused, no transitions between paragraphs, overall structure detracts from well-reasoned argument.</p> <p><b><u>D/E level:</u></b> Argument is missing: student has a “yes and no” thesis or does not take a clear stand. Organization of the essay detracts from readability, makes it difficult for the reader to follow the overall argument.</p>	
<p>Sources and citations (15%)</p> <p>A/B=26-21 pts C= 20-19pts D/E =18-0</p>	<p><b><u>A/B level:</u></b> Student uses proper MLA in-text citations and work cited page. Student cites at least 5 academic sources and 3 other sources, for 8 total sources, and uses those sources to add to their overall argument.</p> <p><b><u>C level:</u></b> Student attempts to use MLA in-text and work cited page, with minor errors. 8 sources are used, but minimum of 5 academic sources are not met. Sources are also not fully integrated into the essay, or not used persuasively to augment the argument.</p> <p><b><u>D/E level:</u></b> Fewer than 8 texts are cited. No academic sources are used. Student does not use MLA citation style, or attempts to use MLA with lots of errors.</p>	
<p>Mechanics (15%)</p> <p>A = 26-24 pts B/C=23-19 pts D/E =18-0pts</p>	<p><b><u>A level:</u></b> Paper is free of mechanical errors (spelling, grammar, typos). Paper is formatted in MLA style (heading, margins, font). Paper meets word count requirements (2500-3000 words).</p> <p><b><u>B/C level:</u></b> Paper is mostly free of mechanical errors (3 or fewer). Paper is formatted in MLA style. Paper meets word count requirements.</p> <p><b><u>D/E level:</u></b> Paper has more than a few mechanical errors. MLA formatting is incomplete or missing.</p> <p>Papers failing to meet the minimum of 2500 words will automatically receive an E grade.</p>	
<p>175 pts</p>	<p>Total points</p>	