

Exercise: paper 2 preparation

Due Friday, April 25, at 10 p.m. on Canvas.

Read the second paper assignment carefully. Tentatively choose a topic and a text you'd like to work on. Spend a little time making some notes about your thoughts on the topic. Then search for a **scholarly article** about your text that may be relevant to your topic. **Skim** the article, trying to identify major claims that your own argument might respond to.

Write a short paragraph (100–150 words) describing your topic and the ways you think you might engage with the source. Make sure to cite your source carefully and completely, so we can give you feedback on whether your choice is appropriate.

The standard starting point for searching for secondary sources in literary studies is the [MLA International Bibliography](#). This is better than the multi-database “article finder” offered on the library homepage; you can search for articles that are about your chosen text by entering e.g. “Devil in a Blue Dress” as a Subject search. The other fundamental database is [JSTOR](#), which lets you search through the full text of articles in many scholarly journals. These databases give search results in “relevance” order, but unfortunately “relevance” is pretty meaningless. Sort the results by date (starting with most recent), and use titles to judge relevance.

You will not always be able to access articles you find citations for instantly online, and sometimes what you can immediately access is not the best source. It is often possible to request scans of articles through [Article Delivery](#). The reference desk at the library is devoted to helping you get to sources you need, so avail yourself of their help.

Steer away from fan and course websites, Wikipedia, newspaper and magazine articles, and other non-academic sources: these are all interesting kinds of material, but they do not carry the same guarantees of scholarly validity as peer-reviewed journals and university-press books do. “AI”-assisted search, which now includes Google’s default behavior, will lead you nowhere good.

GRADING

A reasonable attempt will receive full credit (4.0). Late exercises turned in before May 1 receive half credit (2.0).