

## Term Paper Assignment

### THE RESEARCH PAPER

Research proposal due April 5 at 10 p.m. on Canvas

Presentations in class April 22 and 24

Draft pages due April 29 or May 1 at 10 p.m. on Canvas

Paper due Tuesday, May 7 at 10 p.m. on Canvas

Research and write a paper of approximately 5000–6000 words (15–20 pp.) making an interpretive argument about one or more writers we have read this term. Your particular topic is up to you, but it should have some relation to some of the issues we have raised in our study of Nobel-prizewinning writers and global Anglophone fiction. These issues include the relation between the novel and geography; the literary status of colony, post-colony, and region; the representation of history, time, and memory; the narration (or non-narration) of gender and sexuality in transnational contexts; the relation between an author's explicit political or philosophical positions and their fictions; the processes of universalizing or "worlding"; the representation of artistic development; the question of the English language in relation to other languages; the meanings of experimental form; and so on. You should reflect somewhere on the framing provided by the Nobel prize in relation to your claims, though this need not occupy more than a small part of your paper if it is not central to your topic

I encourage single-author topics, but comparative papers are conceivable. Your argument must be focused, original, and supported by careful analysis of evidence. Your research must include a meaningful engagement with a substantial body of source material beyond the syllabus, including both primary and secondary sources. *Primary* sources are objects of analysis, for example, a further novel, several short fictions, or several non-fiction essays by an author we have read. Documents of historical context or readers' responses to an author's work also need analysis and constitute primary sources; good papers can certainly be written using either or both of these in conjunction with novels we have read.

*Secondary* sources are scholarly articles, book chapters, or monographs that make arguments you engage with. Your research paper must use some secondary sources, but my expectations for your secondary research depend on how much additional primary research you are doing. You are encouraged to use the assigned secondary sources from the syllabus where appropriate. You need not, of course, review the full literature on your subject. Engaging with secondary

sources does not mean simply summarizing that work or quoting it in order to agree. Engagement means building on, complicating, or disputing the other scholar's salient claims. This can be done with something as small as a single footnote or as large as a several-paragraph section of your paper.

*Begin your research forthwith* so that you will have time to find and read all your sources. I will work with each of you to help you find interesting and worthwhile research materials, including primary and secondary sources. Within the paper itself you will have the task of *concisely* introducing your additional sources and analyzing them for your argument. In the end, however, the heart of the paper will be your analysis of the author's fiction.

## REQUIRED WORK

### RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE APRIL 5

The proposal should briefly describe your research question and tentative thoughts about an argument, and list some of the sources you plan to work with.

Your topic can be described in a single paragraph. Explain the central question or problem you are interested in and connect this question or problem to a specific observation or claim about *at least one* of our readings in the course. If you are looking ahead to Ishiguro or Gurnah, of course you may only be referring to the starting pages of the assigned novels.

Your preliminary bibliography should list all the primary sources you are planning to discuss in your paper, with full citations, and at least three scholarly secondary sources. You *can* complete this assignment before you have read all your material: skim intelligently.

You will not be committed to the topic or sources you describe, but it is important to begin your thinking and to do it in writing. If this exercise is not completed on time, I will deduct 0.2 points from the final paper grade (out of 4.0).

### PRESENTATION IN CLASS APRIL 22 AND 24

I will randomly assign you to one of these two presentation days. For that day, prepare a ten-minute talk on your research. Discuss the reading you have done for the paper, and present at least one substantial textual example within a coherent argumentative frame. Explain what you have discovered and how you will use it.

There will be a separate assignment sheet explaining the presentation expect-

tations in more detail. Your presentation is separately graded, with the understanding that it is part of work in progress.

#### PARTIAL DRAFT DUE APRIL 29 OR MAY 1

A week after you give your presentation, turn at least 3 pages of connected draft writing. This draft may be based on your presentation (or not). The draft is ungraded, but if the draft is not turned in on time, I will deduct 0.2 points from the final paper grade (out of 4.0).

#### FINAL PAPER DUE MAY 7

If you have an exam or another large paper deadline, I will consider a one or two-day extension, provided you contact me by April 30. Seniors cannot graduate on time if I am not able to turn in their grades on time. If you do not have an extension, the maximum grade you can receive on a late paper is a 3.0.

#### FORMAT

Your paper should have 1.5-inch left and right margins, with text in twelve-point serif font (e.g.: Garamond, Hoefler Text, Palatino, Baskerville, or, less appealingly, Cambria, Times), and between single and one-and-a-half spacing. *Number all pages.* The paper should have your name and the date on the first page. Give your paper a meaningful title. Cover pages are wastes of imaginary paper.

Submit your paper electronically via the Canvas Assignments tool. E-mail submissions are not acceptable.

Digital submissions should be in Portable Document Format (PDF) if possible. Native word-processor formats (.doc, .docx, .pages, .odt) are acceptable. All word processors can produce PDF files, through a “Save As...” option, an “Export” command, or a “Print to PDF” option in the print dialog.

#### STYLE

*You must proofread carefully.*

Quotations should be carefully transcribed, punctuated, and attributed. All sources must be documented appropriately, either in a MLA-style in-text citation (with “Works Cited” bibliography) or in Chicago-style footnotes. Waste no space: repeated citations to a single text need nothing more than a page number in parentheses. If you use someone else’s work, including someone’s informal comments inside class or out, *you must cite that work.* Using someone else’s work without specific citation is plagiarism. Consistency and thoroughness in citation is more important than exact fidelity to either MLA or Chicago

style. Fairly brief guides to both styles are available on the Purdue OWL site: [owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/](http://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/).

Please follow the conventions of standard written American English. I am non-prescriptive about things like the split infinitive, the sentence-final preposition, and “they” used as a gender-neutral singular pronoun. The passive voice is an excellent grammatical resource and can be used freely, provided it is used wisely.

The best resource on matters of usage is the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary of English Usage*. For detailed information about current and past word uses, the fundamental source is the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

#### GRADING

The syllabus explains the general meaning of marks on the four-point scale. The chief criteria of assessment are:

*Evidence.* Has textual evidence been cited extensively, chosen well, and interpreted effectively in support of claims?

*Motive.* Does the paper make its central problem interesting? Does it participate cogently in an intellectual conversation with other scholars? Does it aim to show something unexpected, something that needs an analysis to be convincing?

*Argument.* Is the argument focused, logical, convincing?

*Line of thought.* Does the paper develop its ideas in connected, orderly fashion? Does the conclusion follow from (and differ from) the opening?

*Style.* Is the paper clearly written? Is it free from typographical, grammatical, and other errors?

#### IN GENERAL

An A-range (3.5–4.0) paper is strong by all these criteria; a B-range (2.5–3.5) paper has well-chosen, well-analyzed evidence but does not fully develop its argument or its motive; a C-range (1.5–2.5) paper lacks evidence or uses evidence only to summarize plot; and a D-range (0.5–1.5) paper is too short or ignores the assignment.

If you submit work that is not your own, you will not receive credit for the assignment, and you will face disciplinary consequences. Any part of your paper that is not by you must be correctly attributed to its source; misrepresenting work written by someone else or generated with an online aid (including “AI”) as

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your own is plagiarism. See the Rutgers academic integrity policy on the website [academicintegrity.rutgers.edu](https://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu).