

GE 13186, Fall 2012 – Third Paper Topics

Due date: Rough draft: Wednesday, Nov. 20, in class. Final paper: Monday, Dec. 3, at 5pm. Please send electronic versions of your rough draft to the members of your peer review group (to be announced later) as well as to tboes@nd.edu. The final paper should be sent to me only.

Length: 5-7 pages, double spaced, standard fonts and margins. Please number your pages and include both your name and mine on the front page or cover sheet. Don't forget to find a descriptive title!

Your final paper will give you a chance to apply the skills that you have acquired over the course of the semester to a topic of your own choosing. A successful essay should thus contain detailed and lengthy close readings of your chosen text as well as some form of meaningful engagement with a secondary source.

You are free to write your paper on either *Colonel Chabert*, on *Heimat*, or on *Blood Meridian*. Please do not write a paper on either *The Odyssey* or on *The Travels*. While a comparative paper is theoretically possible, I discourage it given the temporal, cultural, and formal chasms that separate the texts we examined this semester. Your topic is completely up to you; there are no paper prompts, nor are there scholarly essays to which you must react. Find a problem that interests you, then construct a thesis that is adequate for a paper of this length. Remember that a good topic will be at once highly specific to your chosen text and much broader in import. As an example, you might think about how Erich Auerbach wrote an extremely detailed analysis of a single scene in the *Odyssey*, yet used that scene to say something broader about the nature of representation in Western culture.

You must incorporate at least one *scholarly* (i.e. peer-reviewed) source into your argument, and engage with it at some level. The extent of the engagement is up to you – in some papers, a sentence or two may be perfectly adequate, while other essays might imitate the second assignment in structure. You will find that Balzac, Reitz, and McCarthy all have copious amounts of secondary literature written about them. Use the resources you learned about in the library orientation session, such as the library catalog, the MLA database, or Proquest, to find them. If you are having trouble tracking down anything useful, come see me. Also, out of courtesy to your fellow students, you should not check out more than one source at a time from the library.

You will be writing this paper in both a rough draft and in a final version, as you did with the first essay. Unlike last time, however, your primary source of feedback will come from your fellow students. You will give your essays to a group of peers right before Thanksgiving, and then meet with them right after. Everybody will be required to produce written comments on all the essays that they are evaluating; you will receive a grade on the feedback you provide in addition to the grade on your paper. Rest assured that I will still read all rough drafts, and that you can come see me during office hours if you need additional help.