

PAPER #1: THE ROMANTIC ERA (15%)

Due March 9

For your first big paper in this class, you will compare/contrast two poems from the Romantic Era, analyzing similarities and differences in their themes, structure, imagery, tone, and how they express or reflect the overall spirit of the time period.

- You are free to choose any two poems written by the writers we've looked at during the Romantic Era Unit (weeks 1-6). So, Blake through Keats. I'd prefer you only stick with these writers.
- You may choose two poems by different writers, or two poems by the same writer.
- You are not limited to only choosing poems that we looked at in class. So if you enjoyed Coleridge, for instance, you are not obligated to only write about *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. You can branch out and check out some of his other work, if you want.
- Preferably the two poems you choose should be ones that you personally find interesting, though you don't necessarily have to *like* them — the important thing is that you have something to say about them.

After you have chosen your poems, write a **4-5 page essay (about 1000-1200 words)** comparing and contrasting them. What you choose to focus on in your paper is largely dependent on you and the poems you chose. For instance, you might want to analyze how Percy Shelley and John Keats use similar imagery in their poems; or you might want to discuss the contrast in themes and tone between William Blake's *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*. You could dig deep into the way the poets play with structure, rhyme, and language. You could explore how they approach similar topics in different ways.

However you choose to approach your analysis, your main focus should be on demonstrating your understanding of the poems, the writers, and the historical/cultural context in which they were writing. How do these poems reflect the overall spirit of the age? What elements of the "Romantic Era" do they express?

Your analysis should include several **direct quotes** from the poems themselves, to back up your points. There's not a specific number of quotes I'm looking for, but 3-5 per page is a good average.

You are not required to include any outside sources in this paper, but if you are struggling to come up with ideas, then you may want to look up some scholarly essays about the poems to help give you a boost. If you do use outside sources, make sure they are professional sources written by literary scholars, and don't forget to cite them properly! *Anything that didn't come from your own head always needs to be cited.*

- I recommend using the HCC library database to find good sources. The librarians are always happy to help you research. If you don't know how to access or use the online library databases, just ask. I may go over it in class if enough people ask.
- You are not limited to only finding your sources from the HCC library, however. Just make sure that whatever other sources you find are professional & authoritative; don't use any old random blog you stumbled upon somewhere.
- Study-helper websites such as SparkNotes, Shmoop, etc., can be very helpful for getting inspiration and insight about the poems, but use them with caution! *Be careful not to plagiarize.* Do not simply copy/paste from these websites and run a few words through a thesaurus. Turnitin may not catch you, but I will, and I will not be pleased.
- You can't use Wikipedia as a source. But searching through the Wikipedia footnotes is often a useful way of finding good sources.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE FINAL PAPER:

- An introduction with a clear **thesis statement**, telling me which two poems you are looking at, their authors, and the overall topics you are planning to discuss in the paper.
- Incorporate several **direct quotes** from the poems to support your points, as well as from any additional sources, if you decide to use them.
- All of your quotes and paraphrased information should be correctly cited in **MLA format**.

CITING QUOTES IN MLA FORMAT

When citing poetry, you should write the author's last name in the parentheses, followed by the **line numbers** (not page numbers!). Place a / wherever there is a line break in the poem.

The Mariner's torture is clear in the irony of the line, "Water,
water everywhere, / Nor any drop to drink" (Coleridge 121-2)

If you have a quote that is longer than four lines, then start it on a new line and write it exactly as it's written in its original form.

If you are quoting from two poems by the same author, you should also include a shortened version of the title to specify which poem you're referring to.

In both poems, Keats seems almost envious of the immortality of his subject, saying "Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!" (Keats, "Nightingale" 61) and "Ah happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed / Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu" (Keats, "Grecian Urn" 21-2).

- Include a properly formatted **MLA Works Cited Page** at the end. This should list the two poems you analyzed, as well as any other sources you may have used.
 - If you aren't sure how to make a proper Works Cited page, please refer to the MLA Style Guide on the HCC Library's website: <https://library.hccs.edu/mla-guide/bibliography>
- **DO NOT PLAGIARIZE.** If you use an author's exact words, you must put them in quotation marks and cite your source. Otherwise, you must paraphrase. Both direct quotes and paraphrases should be cited.
- Length: 4-5 pages (about 1000-1200 words). You can go over that if you want, but don't write me a whole book. I expect four *full* pages, at minimum. A couple of lines at the top of the 4th page doesn't count. The Works Cited page is not included in this.

FORMAT REQUIREMENTS:

- Font: Times New Roman, 12 pt. size
- Double-spaced; indented paragraphs; no extra spaces between paragraphs, please.
- MLA style heading and page numbers. If you aren't sure how to do this, please refer to the MLA Style Guide on the HCC Library's website.

ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES:

- **Rough Draft** = due Wednesday 3/2 (online)
 - Submit your rough draft of Paper #1 to Canvas by no later than midnight on Wednesday night. It should be at least 3 full pages, though it doesn't have to have an ending yet. At the end of your rough draft, please include at least 3 questions about the paper that you want your peer review partner to answer, e.g. "Do you think ___ part is weak? How would you suggest improving ___?"
- **Peer Review** = due Friday 3/4 (online)
 - You will be randomly assigned someone else's rough draft to peer review. Look over it, leave feedback for how they might improve, and fill out the rubric that will be included. To get full credit for this assignment, you must 1) edit the paper, 2) answer the questions your partner asked at the end of their paper, and provide some general feedback; and 3) fill out the rubric, with comments where applicable.
 - Someone else will also be looking over your own rough draft too, so use their feedback when you are typing up your final draft.
- **Final Draft** = due Wednesday 3/9 (online)
 - Submit the final 4-5 page version of Paper #1 by no later than midnight on Wednesday. Remember, I do not accept late work when it comes to the three big papers. Once midnight hits, if I don't have your paper, it's a zero—no exceptions.
- **Revision** (optional) = due anytime before Sunday 5/15
 - After I have graded your paper and given you feedback, you have the option to revise the paper again and turn in a new version in order to raise your grade. How much your grade changes depends on how much work you put into it and how much you take my feedback into consideration. You may submit a revision anytime throughout the semester. All revisions should be sent to me either through Canvas inbox or email, with the subject line clearly stating what it is.
 - **NOTE:** You may not actually see an improvement in your grade for a while, especially if you turn in a revision early, since I often don't get around to grading them till close to the end of the semester.

OTHER OPTIONAL HELP:

- I will be giving everyone basic feedback on your rough drafts, but if you'd like me to give you more detailed feedback (helping with grammar, organization, etc.), then you can email your rough drafts to me early and I will look over them when I have time. However, I will not look over any rough drafts sent to me the day before the final draft is due, so make sure you send it before then—the earlier, the better!
- You may also have an HCC tutor look over your rough draft ahead of time. You can contact an online tutor by going to <https://hccs.upswing.io/>. Provide me with evidence that a tutor looked at your paper, and I will give you extra credit points. :-)