

**ENGL3041A: Literary Influences in Global Contexts of American Literature**

**Final Essay**

**Due: Prospectus: Thursday 30 April**

**(working overview, 300-500 words) and short bibliography**

**Final paper: Friday 29 May 2020 via email**

**Write an essay (8 – 10 pages / 2500-3000 words, double spaced) on one of the following topics. Please know that the following are broad-based topics and it important that you focus the topic areas as you formulate your thesis (the argument of your essay). Please be sure to define carefully your key term(s) and to explain to your reader why the points that you are making matter (that is, what are the stakes and significance of interpreting the texts as you do?).**

**A: Object:**

Interpret a text (or two) by selecting an object that appears in the narrative and doing some research on what that object is: where it comes from, how it is made, how it is used. It could be an object that seems at first to be a detail but that actually holds a key to interpreting the text and triggering bigger ideas.

Suggested sources for considering how you might consider do this:

Bill Brown, "Thing Theory," *Critical Inquiry* 28.1 (Autumn 2001): 1-22.  
Elaine Freedgood, *The Ideas in Things* (2006).

**B: Influence:**

Consider a point of explicit or implicit influence between authors, where one text refers back and to another author/text. Questions arise: why, how, and to what effect does this reference adapt, extend, or appropriate the earlier work? In taking up these questions, please try to focus your attention on specific terms of the influence.

**C: Concept:**

Choose one of the "Key Words" from the course schedule. The secondary reading by Anderson, Renan, or others might provide the tools with which you can develop a working definition that enables you to interpret a text or two, analyzing the stylistic features of the text as it relates to the Key Word.

**D: Adaptation:**

Consider a film or dramatic adaptation of something that we have read this semester. How does the adaptation re-interpret the primary text? It would be a good idea to get specific as you can in relating the adaptation to the original text—perhaps focusing on a single scene or specific stylistic feature that bridges the two texts.

**E: Syllabus (2-part final):**

PART 1: In the future you are tasked with teaching an introductory or mid-level course in a Department of Literature somewhere in the world. Please come up with a title, abstract course description, and a course schedule for the semester, including methods of teaching and objects that you hope to achieve in the course. There are no restrictions on what you might teach—you could mix up different types of texts and move across disciplines. However, please try to think pragmatically about what you could actually cover in a semester of 12 to 15 weeks.

PART 2: Then, write a paper that explains the concept of your course and the logic of its development over the weeks of the semester. You could be teaching in Hong Kong or anywhere in the world—so please identify where this takes place.