Welcome to the start of a new collegiate adventure: the world of critical analysis! Up to this point in the year, you have been encouraged to develop your own analytical skills, and to study prose and poetry, fiction and nonfiction, through the lens of your own thinking. Scholars must hone their own brains, but they also use the wisdom gained from other scholars who have come before them, and they continue to sharpen their skills by testing their ideas against those of their peers. To that end, you will now begin work on the Critical Analysis Paper, a scholarly argument in which you will combine critical analysis and research to produce a work of original scholarship.

Below are the key events and dates in the project (please mark them in your planners right away; assume these are all firm dates, and that each item is to be turned in **electronically and in paper form** by the deadline unless otherwise noted). Assume all deadlines are at the start of class if your section meets on that day; if your section does not meet on that day, you must deliver your paper copy (as well as your Turnitin.com copy, if required) by 7:55 a.m. on the due date.

Length: 6-9 typed pages + Works Cited page

Due Dates:

- Dec. 7 (R): CAP Novel Choices Assignment (20 points)
- Dec. 15 (I): Final novel choice due (10 points)
- Jan. 18 (I): CAP Novel Read
- Feb. 2 (E): MLA citation for the book you have ultimately chosen, along with annotated bibliography of 4 useful scholarly sources (20 points)
- Feb. 12 (R): Three possible thesis statements with bulleted support ideas (10 points)
- Feb. 22 (R): Full thesis due, based on final thesis choice (roughly 4-5 sentences) (10 points)
- Mar. 15 (I): Annotated working bibliography (20 points)
- Mar. 27 (R): Sentence outline due (20 points)
- Apr. 11 (N): Complete draft due for peer review (20 points)
- Apr. 26 (R): Revised draft due to Dr. Vaccaro
- May 24: Final paper due, with Works Cited page, in paper form and to Turnitin.com (100 points)

****All items must be typed according to MLA style. If an item is due in paper form and you are not able to bring it to class in person by the deadline, you must still post it to Turnitin.com by the deadline as a placeholder, and bring the paper copy to Dr. Vaccaro in Rm. 308 upon your return to school. If you have trouble with Turnitin.com for a given deadline, you must email a readable Word doc, pdf doc, or photograph of the completed assignment to your instructor by the deadline as a placeholder.
CAP Novel Choices Assignment

1. Browse novels of substance by canonical American authors.

2. Bring a list of at least 3 novels that appeal to you. You must have vetted them for appropriateness for the project (Is there enough scholarly criticism about this author and this particular novel? Is this novel considered to be of literary merit? Is this novel meant for adult readers, as opposed to children or “young adult” readers?). You are not to choose books likely to have been studied in the younger grades (To Kill a Mockingbird, Of Mice and Men, Old Man and the Sea, The Pearl, etc.), even though these books may have great literary merit. All final novel choices are subject to approval by the instructor.

3. Write a summary sentence, based on your browsing of a variety of useful summary sources of what you understand each novel to be about (please do not limit yourself to Amazon’s book reviews, though they could be a good starting place). Ideally, try to read the books and write a summary sentence of the plot based on your own experience!

4. List at least 3 different scholarly articles that appear to have a bearing on your first-choice novel. None of them may be a Bloom publication. For the other two novels on your list, you must find at least one scholarly article for each. Spread your wings and look beyond the first, or easiest, source you find. Note: you do not need to have read all of these articles; you need only browse them, to ensure that there appears to be plentiful scholarship about your possible choices.

Here’s an interesting starter list for novels:
http://bookriot.com/2013/07/03/the-100-greatest-american-novels-1893-1993/

Here are some databases to visit on the BI database board (portal):
- Project Muse
- Biography in Context
- JSTOR
- Literature in Context
- Literature Resources from Gale

Here are some useful journals to consider:
- American Literature
- American Studies
- Early American Literature (pre-1820)
- ELH: English Literary History
- ESQ: A Journal of the American Renaissance
- Modern Fiction Studies
- Mississippi Quarterly
- New England Quarterly
- PMLA: Publications of the Modern Language Association
- Studies in American Fiction

See http://public.wsu.edu/~campbelld/amlit/jourbib.htm for a more complete list of journals likely to offer worthy scholarship.

Due: Dec. 7
Total Worth: 20 pts.
Advice for Researching and Writing the CAP

1. Browse the stacks, JSTOR, and other locations for scholarly criticism to ensure that the work of fiction, drama, or poetry you have chosen has been analyzed thoroughly enough by enough scholars of American literature to provide ample resources for your own paper. Note: scholarly criticism does not mean book reviews or opinion articles, no matter how well respected the magazines may be in which they appear. Your research will center on full-length books, chapters in books, or journal articles published by university presses or publishing houses of similar academic focus, written by scholars of American literature. The journals and books must focus on American literature as literature; do not focus mainly on journals or books on other, extra-textual topics (science fiction; gender or race studies; American studies; psychology, sociology, or anthropology; “-ism” studies, such as Marxism, etc.). You need to choose a highly regarded American author (one with a serious literary reputation) and read a full-length book by that author. If you have any qualms about your choice, please see your instructor immediately. The purpose of this assignment is to learn how to work effectively with scholarly criticism on the subject of American literature as literature.

2. Research! You will have some time in the BI library to get reacquainted with the resources and technology available for you as you research your topic, take notes, and develop your argument. However, as in any college course, you will do the majority of the research and other work outside of class time. After familiarizing yourself with the current and historic scholarship about your chosen work, you will craft your own thesis: an arguable point you wish to develop about this piece of literature. This is not a summary of other scholar’s points; it is your own idea, which will be bolstered by the scholarship you review in your research. Your thesis could come from topics such as these: ways in which the author uses particular literary or rhetorical tools in order to reveal character; use of particular tools (symbolism, point of view, tone, syntax…) to reveal theme, character, etc.; purpose of humor/irony/satire, and so on. Note: the time to tell your instructor that you cannot come up with a thesis for the work you have chosen is before the firm deadlines, listed below.

3. Write! You will have workshops and plenty of support as you move from thesis to full thesis, from sentence outline to draft, and from draft to final 6-9-page paper.