

Paper #1

Your first paper for this course will be about some aspect of *The Turn of the Screw*. You may focus on whatever you find most interesting and puzzling about the novel. You may use rubrics drawn from Lang, Stevenson, or Bakhtin, or from class discussion, but you needn't do so. What matters is that you make a well-supported interpretive argument about the book.

Whatever your focus, you'll need to limit the textual evidence you draw on in your paper. You might home in on one or two key words, a specific event, a pivotal scene or encounter, a concrete object, a location, or on how these elements are repeated, inverted, or developed over the course of the novella. Or you could pay attention to a specific narrative technique. The idea is to choose something small that sheds light on something important in the text.

Building on the writing assignments you've completed so far, you should undertake a robust and free-spirited pre-writing process in which you engage closely with specific passages of the novella and brainstorm about possible analyses. Try to keep an open mind at these early stages. Rather than committing to an argument and trying to find evidence supporting it, turn your initial ideas into questions and pose them to the text—and be prepared for surprising answers.

And just as in your last assignment, try to think of the paper as an opportunity to explore—and, so, in the process, tell me about—an aspect of the novel that genuinely interests you. The more excited you are about showing me what you've discovered, the better your paper will be.

This assignment has two stages:

1. Partial draft:

- a. outline, including a thesis statement and topic sentences for each paragraph, along with some indication of the specific textual evidence to be considered
- b. introduction, including thesis statement (about 200-250 words long)
- c. one-two body paragraphs, including a topic sentence, evidence, and analysis (about 250-300 words each)

This draft should be as good as you can make it, featuring a powerful and precise argument, well-constructed and well-argued paragraphs, and error-free prose.

~~Bring three copies of your draft to class on Oct. 7**~~**

~~Two will be used for the in-class workshop; the third will be read by me or Lynn in preparation for the one-on-one workshop.~~

2. Substantive revision and cover letter:

- a. The revised paper should be about 1000-1200 words long, consisting of an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion.
- b. The revision should complete and improve the paper:
 - i. expand, clarify, and develop the argument
 - ii. improve and finish the presentation and analysis of textual evidence
 - iii. develop the cogency and force of argumentation in the paper as a whole
 - iv. fix grammatical errors and work on the fluency of your writing.

- c. In your cover letter, explain what you have done. Err on the side of over-explanation—really explain to me the revisions you've undertaken, your reasons for undertaking them, and the success (or lack thereof) of your efforts.