

## *Paper 1: Theories of Emotion and Literary Texts*

**Basic Assignment.** Connect a particular idea about emotion to a literary text. Both the idea (from a theory of emotion) and the literary text should be taken from our reading schedule.

**Suggested Approaches.** You may draw the connection in a number of different ways. You might show how a particular idea about emotion (Aristotle's notion of tragic pity or Freud's theory of melancholia, for example) enhances our understanding of the literary text you've selected. How does the theory help us understand the text? Another approach would be to use a literary text to illustrate or elaborate a theory of emotion. How does the text help us understand the theory? A third approach might reveal the theory of emotion found in the text; this theory in the literary text could then be compared to another theory of emotion. What's the theory of emotion in the text itself and how is it similar to or different from another, non-literary theory of emotion?

**Proposals.** I will accept three different kinds of proposals on or before Monday, September 19: 1) a paper conference with me (please see me to schedule a time); 2) a one-page, typed explanation of the connection you're considering and why; or 3) an e-mail version of #2.

**What-I'm-Looking-For.** Because this class is a humanities lab, failed experiments—ideas or arguments that are smart but not perfect—will be part of our efforts. Try out new and daring ideas without worrying too much about whether it's normal or right to think that way. We should also try to make these papers *interesting* (it's a class on emotion after all!). Still, while experimenting, you'll want to heed the conventions of literary criticism and the basics of logic and evidence. When I'm reading these papers, I'll be asking myself the following questions:

- Does the paper connect an idea about emotion to a literary text?
- Does it make a specific, arguable claim (or claims) about the texts or ideas examined?
- Does it explain in a clear and persuasive manner its interpretation of those texts?
- Does it support its interpretation with analysis and appropriate, direct references to the texts?
- Is it organized clearly enough so that others in the class could follow the argument?
- Does the paper acknowledge its sources using a bibliography and a clear and consistent style of documentation?
- Would the paper be interesting to others in the class? Does it avoid saying the obvious?

**Revisions.** After I return your papers (on October 5th probably), please read my comments. If you would then like to revise your paper, please do so. Revisions are due one week after papers have been returned (October 12th). A revision will not automatically receive a better grade. The revision must be substantially improved to merit a grade change. Simply correcting typos or making editing corrections will not warrant a higher grade. To submit a revision, please write a one-paragraph summary explaining why and how you revised and hand it in with both the revised version and the old version with my comments.

**Due Date.** Wednesday, September 28th

**Length.** 5-8 typed, double-spaced pages