

All materials handed in for grade MUST have the following information either in a header or on a separate cover sheet.

Your name

Your student ID #

Course Name

Instructor's Name

Assignment Title

Your Subtitle (where applicable, as on the Remix or Essay Outline and Essay assignments)

Date Submitted

ESSAY TOPICS: ESSAY OPTIONS A AND B

DUE DATES: All essays are due **AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS**

Option A: Outline **OCTOBER 23**; Essay **NOVEMBER 15**

Option B: Essay **NOVEMBER 15**

LENGTH: 6 pages (excluding works cited), Times New Roman 12pt. font, double-spaced, 1" margins.

INSTRUCTIONS: See **ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS** for Essay Options A and B for additional instructions. These can be found on the "Assignments" page of the class blog.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

I have included along with each general topic some supplementary questions to help you to begin to explore the topic and to narrow your focus. You are not required to answer *all* of the supplementary questions or to address *all* of the suggested issues, as long as your paper provides a clear, lucid and compelling treatment of some aspect of the general topic, argues a **significant thesis**, and supports this with both detailed **close reading** and attention to the **critical field**. Note that your papers should conduct a substantial **comparison** of the texts you choose.

Be sure to print out the "Grading Summary" document and attach this to the back of your essay. This document can be found on the "Assignments" page of the class blog.

Essays that are off topic **WILL RECEIVE A GRADE OF ZERO**.

NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED without appropriate medical documentation. Computer problems are not excuses for late assignments. Make copies of all work submitted for grade.

TOPICS

Topic One

Conduct a **sustained comparison** of TWO (2) of the following texts with regard to their representation of **limitation and transcendence**: Marlowe, *The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus*; Donne, "Batter my heart..."; Spenser, *The Faerie Queene* Book I, canto 1; Philips,

“Friendship’s Mystery, To My Dearest Lucasia”; Elizabeth I, “Speech...November 5, 1566”; Sidney "An Apology for Poetry: The Poet as Prophet." What is the nature of human limitation? What is the nature of transcendence? Are these concepts complementary or in tension? Why? What strategies, images, metaphors do the texts deploy to confront human limitation? Are they resigned or defiant? Why? To what effect? What broader social, political, artistic, intellectual contexts illuminate the texts' engagement with the concepts of limitation and transcendence?

Topic Two

Conduct a **sustained comparison** of TWO (2) of the following texts with regard to their representation of **learning** and the **human mind**: Marlow, *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*; Bacon, “Of Truth”/ “Of Superstition”; More, *Utopia*: “Their Delight in Learning”; Lanyer, “Eve’s Apology”; Hoby (trans.) from Castiglione's *The Courtier*, "Grace." How is the human mind characterized? Is it limited? If so, by what and to what effect? How is learning characterized? Where does knowledge come from? What is the relationship between the human mind/capacity for learning and the natural or supernatural or social realms? What is the relationship between learning and responsibility? Between learning and innocence (Can one be learned *and* innocent)? Are there good and bad kinds of minds or learning? If so, how are these defined and to what effect? What formal aspects of the texts communicate their understanding of the Early Modern attitude toward the capacities of the human mind? What broader social, political, artistic, intellectual contexts illuminate the texts' engagement with the idea of learning and the capacity of the human mind?

Topic Three

Conduct a **sustained comparison** of TWO (2) of the following texts with regard to their representation of **the natural world**: Marlowe, *The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus*; Milton, "Lycidas"; Hooker, from *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*; Donne, “The Ecstasy” OR “Meditation 17”; Marvell, “Bermudas”; Vaughan, “The World.” What is the relationship between nature and the human body, its passions, its appetites? Between nature and social structures? Are these harmonious or contentious relationships? Why? Is nature gendered? If so, to what effect? What is the role of labour in the natural world? What is the relationship between wild and "tame" spaces, country and city? What formal aspects of the texts communicate their understanding of the natural world? What broader social, political, artistic, intellectual contexts illuminate the texts' engagement with the concept of the natural world?

Some useful Journals: *16th Century Journal* (available on the web); *ELH* (fulltext available on the web); *Spenser Studies*; *Studies in English Literature*; *Comparative Drama*; *Renaissance Quarterly*; *Renaissance Drama*; *Early Modern Literary Studies* (on the web); *Explicator* (on the web); *Exemplaria* (on the web); *Cahiers Elisabethains* (English and French text, on the web); *English Literary Renaissance*; *Early Modern Literature in History*; *Early Modern Women*; *Renaissance and Reformation*.