

## Research Paper Assignment

**Assignment:** Due May 9 7:30 p.m. in our classroom (Bliss 145), an argumentative **10**-page essay on a topic for which you must do research and textual analysis of the Albee play(s) in order to support your claim. (Be sure to write at least 10 full pages.) You should use MLA documentation style (page numbers cited parenthetically in text, works cited page). Be sure to review the Paper Guidelines document on SOCS on how to write literary analysis essays.

In your paper you are required to **quote from a minimum of 5 academic sources** (scholarly articles and books on Albee). **At least four** of the five should be published scholarship on the play(s) that help you corroborate your reading (or that you argue against); **no more than ONE** may be a review of a particular production. **No more than ONE** of the minimum of 5 sources can be an online source, and it should be one of some sophistication, authority, and reliability (not Wikipedia). (If the article was originally published in a scholarly journal, then it needn't count for the one online source, or if it is an online juried scholarly journal it needn't count. If you find more than one good internet source, you may use them, but only one counts as one of the 5 sources.) You may use more than 5 sources, but keep in mind that the more sources you cite the longer a paper will be (unless you've slipped into the string-of-quotations from secondary sources mode, which is not what you should do).

**Topic:** You may write on any aspect you wish, including any of the standard topic questions (see papers #1 and #2 assignments). Whichever topic you choose, you must discuss postmodernism somewhere in the paper (can be a comprehensive reading from one theoretical approach, but does NOT have to be). You may use in addition any of the theories of comedy or tragedy on SOCS, if they will help you support your thesis (they just don't count as one of the 5 minimum sources). Or you might synthesize two approaches (e.g., argue that *Finding the Sun* is a Nietzschean gay tragedy).

Don't shy away from arguing an interpretation of an issue in the drama just because I may not agree with that position or theory. I'll make comments as a student of literature with certain beliefs, biases, etc., but also as an instructor: objective, regardless of whether I agree or disagree with you on the issue. All you have to do is make a good case for your reading of the work(s), using published scholarship, theory, and your own textual analysis to support individual points and your thesis overall.

**Research:** Your research is not the end of this project; it is one of the means to your end. Therefore, give quotations, etc. their proper emphasis as corroborating evidence for your interpretative points, which are supported by your own analysis of the primary sources. Be open to the possibility of adjusting your stand on an issue as a result of researching, thinking, and writing about the subject in depth. You are not required to have read everything published on the play(s); that particular hell is reserved for the doctoral dissertation and the tenure track. You will want to use the subject search in the TCNJ online catalogue or databases, the most important of which is the MLA Bibliography.

**Audience:** Your audience is students (professional scholars and your classmates) of Albee. Assume your readers know the play(s) already, so there is no need to summarize the plot. You will undoubtedly analyze part(s) of the plot as one kind of textual evidence to support a particular point and the thesis overall, but wherever possible find a quote from the primary and secondary sources. Do not assume your readers have read a particular scholarly work (thus you must quote, paraphrase, summarize as needed)

**Research Proposal:** In order to make sure you get feedback during the process and not just afterward, turn in a research paper proposal Thursday April 11th in class. Each proposal should be approximately one page long. In it you should state as specifically as you can the topic (issue, theme, interpretation) and aspect of postmodernism on which you want to research and to analyze text. State which play(s) you anticipate analyzing and how you think aspects of the work(s) relate to your topic.

May the Force be with you throughout this challenging but exciting process of reading, thinking, researching, and writing about the comedies and/or histories of Albee.

## PAPER FORMAT

Papers should be typed **double-spaced** on a word processor. Use only one side of 8 1/2" x 11" paper. **Set all 4 margins to no more than 1¼ (1.25); don't justify the right margin. Set font to 12 pt.; use Times New Roman font.** On separate single-spaced lines, put your name, LIT 499-03, date, Dr. Konkle, and topic # in the upper left-hand corner of the first page. Center your title above the first line (no title page). (By the way, italicize play titles.) Number subsequent pages in the upper right-hand corner. (If you don't know how to have the word processor paginate the document, then at least number the pages by hand.) Be sure to **proofread a hard copy** of your paper after having the word processor check the spelling for you. (Be wary of the grammar check; the suggestions are often wrong.) Try reading your paper aloud; you will hear mistakes you might have missed otherwise. Staple the pages together on the upper left-hand corner.