



ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

GENERAL STUDIES COURSE PROPOSAL COVER FORM

Course information:

Copy and paste current course information from Class Search/Course Catalog.

Academic Unit New College Department School of Humanities, Arts & Cultural Studies
Subject ENG Number 431 Title Whitman and Dickinson Units: 3
Is this a cross-listed course? No
Is this a shared course? No

Catalog description: Evaluates the 19th-century American Literary Renaissance through the specialized examination of its poetry and authors in their historical context.

In-depth description: ENG 431 Whitman and Dickinson focuses upon two poets now considered central to the American literary tradition: Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman.

Requested designation: Literacy and Critical Inquiry-L
Note- a separate proposal is required for each designation requested

Eligibility: Permanent numbered courses must have completed the university's review and approval process. For the rules governing approval of omnibus courses, contact Phyllis.Lucie@asu.edu or Lauren.Leo@asu.edu.

Submission deadlines dates are as follow: For Fall 2015 Effective Date: October 9, 2014 For Spring 2016 Effective Date: March 19, 2015

Area(s) proposed course will serve: A single course may be proposed for more than one core or awareness area. A course may satisfy a core area requirement and more than one awareness area requirements concurrently, but may not satisfy requirements in two core areas simultaneously, even if approved for those areas.

- Checklists for general studies designations: Complete and attach the appropriate checklist
Literacy and Critical Inquiry core courses (L)
Mathematics core courses (MA)
Computer/statistics/quantitative applications core courses (CS)
Humanities, Arts and Design core courses (HU)
Social-Behavioral Sciences core courses (SB)
Natural Sciences core courses (SQ/SG)
Cultural Diversity in the United States courses (C)
Global Awareness courses (G)
Historical Awareness courses (H)

- A complete proposal should include:
Signed General Studies Program Course Proposal Cover Form
Criteria Checklist for the area
Course Catalog description
Course Syllabus
Copy of Table of Contents from the textbook and list of required readings/books

Respectfully request that proposals are submitted electronically with all files compiled into one PDF. If necessary, a hard copy of the proposal will be accepted.

Contact information:



ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

Name Christopher Hanlon Phone 605-543-6092

Mail code 2151 E-mail: christopher.hanlon@asu.edu
(cc: tracy.encizo@asu.edu)

Department Chair/Director approval: *(Required)*

Chair/Director name (Typed): Louis Mendoza Date: 12/11/2014

Chair/Director (Signature): 

Arizona State University Criteria Checklist for
LITERACY AND CRITICAL INQUIRY - [L]

Rationale and Objectives

Literacy is here defined broadly as communicative competence—that is, competence in written and oral discourse. **Critical inquiry** involves the gathering, interpretation, and evaluation of evidence. Any field of university study may require unique critical skills that have little to do with language in the usual sense (words), but the analysis of written and spoken evidence pervades university study and everyday life. Thus, the General Studies requirements assume that all undergraduates should develop the ability to reason critically and communicate using the medium of language.

The requirement in Literacy and Critical Inquiry presumes, first, that training in literacy and critical inquiry must be sustained beyond traditional First Year English in order to create a habitual skill in every student; and, second, that the skill levels become more advanced, as well as more secure, as the student learns challenging subject matter. Thus, two courses beyond First Year English are required in order for students to meet the Literacy and Critical Inquiry requirement.

Most lower-level [L] courses are devoted primarily to the further development of critical skills in reading, writing, listening, speaking, or analysis of discourse. Upper-division [L] courses generally are courses in a particular discipline into which writing and critical thinking have been fully integrated as means of learning the content and, in most cases, demonstrating that it has been learned.

Notes:

1. ENG 101, 107 or ENG 105 must be prerequisites
2. Honors theses, XXX 493 meet [L] requirements
3. The list of criteria that must be satisfied for designation as a Literacy and Critical Inquiry [L] course is presented on the following page. This list will help you determine whether the current version of your course meets all of these requirements. If you decide to apply, please attach a current syllabus, or handouts, or other documentation that will provide sufficient information for the General Studies Council to make an informed decision regarding the status of your proposal.

Revised April 2014

Proposer: Please complete the following section and attach appropriate documentation.

ASU - [L] CRITERIA		
TO QUALIFY FOR [L] DESIGNATION, THE COURSE DESIGN MUST PLACE A MAJOR EMPHASIS ON COMPLETING CRITICAL DISCOURSE--AS EVIDENCED BY THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:		
YES	NO	Identify Documentation Submitted
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>CRITERION 1: At least 50 percent of the grade in the course should depend upon writing assignments (see Criterion 3). Group projects are acceptable only if each student gathers, interprets, and evaluates evidence, and prepares a summary report. <i>In-class essay exams may not be used for [L] designation.</i></p>
		<p>Please see grading formula and assignment descriptions in course syllabus. Pertinent material marked "C1."</p>
<p>1. Please describe the assignments that are considered in the computation of course grades--and indicate the proportion of the final grade that is determined by each assignment.</p>		
<p>2. Also:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 20px; text-align: center;"> <p style="background-color: yellow;">Please circle, underline, or otherwise mark the information presented in the most recent course syllabus (or other material you have submitted) that verifies this description of the grading process--and label this information "C-1".</p> </div> <p>C-1</p>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>CRITERION 2: The writing assignments should involve gathering, interpreting, and evaluating evidence. They should reflect critical inquiry, extending beyond opinion and/or reflection.</p>
		<p>Please see (1) course syllabus and (2) sample essay assignment on Emily Dickinson. Pertinent material marked "C2."</p>
<p>1. Please describe the way(s) in which this criterion is addressed in the course design.</p>		
<p>2. Also:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 20px; text-align: center;"> <p style="background-color: yellow;">Please circle, underline, or otherwise mark the information presented in the most recent course syllabus (or other material you have submitted) that verifies this description of the grading process--and label this information "C-2".</p> </div> <p>C-2</p>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>CRITERION 3: The syllabus should include a minimum of two writing and/or speaking assignments that are substantial in depth, quality, and quantity. Substantial writing assignments entail sustained in-depth engagement with the material. Examples include research papers, reports, articles, essays, or speeches that reflect critical inquiry and evaluation. Assignments such as brief reaction papers, opinion pieces, reflections, discussion posts, and impromptu presentations are not considered substantial writing/speaking assignments.</p>
		<p>Please see assignment descriptions in course syllabus; pertinent material marked "C3."</p>
<p>1. Please provide relatively detailed descriptions of two or more substantial writing or speaking tasks that are included in the course requirements</p>		
<p>2. Also:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 20px; text-align: center;"> <p style="background-color: yellow;">Please circle, underline, or otherwise mark the information presented in the most recent course syllabus (or other material you have submitted) that verifies this description of the grading process--and label this information "C-3".</p> </div> <p>C-3</p>		

ASU - [L] CRITERIA

YES	NO		Identify Documentation Submitted
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	CRITERION 4: These substantial writing or speaking assignments should be arranged so that the students will get timely feedback from the instructor on each assignment in time to help them do better on subsequent assignments. <i>Intervention at earlier stages in the writing process is especially welcomed.</i>	(1) Course syllabus: Pertinent material marked "C4."
1. Please describe the sequence of course assignments--and the nature of the feedback the current (or most recent) course instructor provides to help students do better on subsequent assignments			
2. Also: <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 20px; text-align: center; margin: 20px auto; width: 80%;">Please circle, underline, or otherwise mark the information presented in the most recent course syllabus (or other material you have submitted) that verifies this description of the grading process--and label this information "C-4".</div> C-4			

Course Prefix	Number	Title	General Studies Designation
ENG	431	Whitman and Dickinson	L

Explain in detail which student activities correspond to the **specific** designation criteria.
Please use the following organizer to explain how the criteria are being met.

Criteria (from checksheet)	How course meets spirit (contextualize specific examples in next column)	Please provide detailed evidence of how course meets criteria (i.e., where in syllabus)
1. At least 50 percent of the grade in the course should depend upon writing assignments.	Two major essay assignments comprise 40 percent of the course grade. Less formal writing (blogging) emphasizes evidence-based reasoning, and accounts for an additional 10 percent of the final grade. Lastly, an in-class presentation emphasizes historical knowledge and compels students to place literary production in the context of economic, social, scientific, or political events. This assignment accounts for an additional 15 percent of the grade.	See grading formula on course syllabus; writing assignment descriptions on course syllabus; blogging description on course syllabus; in-class presentation description on course syllabus. Relevant items marked "C1."
2. The writing assignments should involve gathering, interpreting, and evaluating evidence. They should reflect critical inquiry, extending beyond opinion and/or reflection.	Essay assignments require students to place literary works within economic, social, scientific, aesthetic, or political contexts. Essay assignments as well as blogging assignments require students to rely upon skills of close reading in order to develop insight into how individual works produce constellations of meaning. In-class presentations emphasize historical knowledge as a basis for literary insight. None of these assignments prompt students to reflect in a merely intuitive or uncritical way.	See assignment descriptions on course syllabus as well as sample essay assignment on Dickinson. Pertinent items marked "C2."
3. The syllabus should include minimum of two writing/speaking assignments that are substantial in depth, quality, and quantity.	Two major essay assignments.	See essay assignments section in course syllabus. Also see sample essay assignment on Dickinson. Pertinent item marked "C3"

<p>4. These substantial writing or speaking assignments should be arranged so that students will get timely feedback from the instructor on each assignment in time to help them do better on subsequent assignments.</p>	<p>Preliminary drafts required on both essays to allow for instructor feedback prior to final draft; an interregnum of weeks separates first from second major essay.</p>	<p>See draft due dates in course schedule in syllabus. Also note that blogging format allows instructor to offer feedback to individual bloggers. Pertinent items on syllabus marked "C4."</p>
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Professor Christopher Hanlon
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Office Hours: T, R 9:30-11 am
217.549.0130

English 431 focuses upon two poets now considered central to the American literary tradition: Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman. Though they lived during the same era, Dickinson and Whitman appear in many ways to have been very different sorts of people. Dickinson lived her life in the remote village of Amherst, Massachusetts, and came out of a conservative religious tradition. She never married, and though she wrote over 1775 poems during her lifetime, she only saw eleven into publication, and she died in obscurity. Whitman was a man of Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Long Island, was a flamboyant self-promoter, and considered himself the poetic bard of his nation. By the end of his life, he was nationally known for his writing.

While we get to know these two writers in a loose, wide-ranging way, we will also become *very* familiar with their state of mind—and also the state of their culture—during two signal years. For Whitman, the key moment is 1855, the year he made his public debut with the publication of his first edition of *Leaves of Grass*, the volume that gained him not only notoriety as a kind of bohemian (Dickinson found him so shameful she pretended not to have read him) but also respect as a radically creative new poetic voice (after reading the 1855 edition, Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote in a letter to Whitman, “I greet you at the beginning of a brilliant career.”). For Dickinson, the year of note would be 1862, during which, for some reason, Dickinson wrote 366 poems, more than a poem a day. These 366 poems represented an aesthetic leap forward for American poetics; taken together, their gnomic form, disruptive rhythms, and jarring rhymes provide the launching pad for the modernist aesthetic of the twentieth century. But there would be no letters from Emerson to take note of what Dickinson was accomplishing in her writing, because she kept it largely to herself, and after the year was over, her writing tapered off to more modest levels. Over the course of our study of Dickinson, we will try to hazard educated hypotheses on what prompted this enormous literary output.

In 1855, the United States was fast approaching the political deadlock that would result in the secession of eleven Southern states. In 1862, the country was embroiled in the Civil War, one which Americans were realizing would be much bloodier than had been expected. Dickinson and Whitman would each respond in their own way to what Lincoln called the crisis of the “House Divided,” and we will learn much this semester about the political causes and ramifications of the war itself. Working together, we will also learn a lot about the American mind of 1855 and 1862, and what we learn will help us to draw conclusions—and write compelling essays—about Emily Dickinson’s and Walt Whitman’s poetry. Thus, this course will equip you to carry out advanced research in American literature and culture while also helping you to develop the skills of synthesis, organization, and exposition that are the credentials of every successful university-level writer. We’ll also familiarize ourselves with electronic resources—the Whitman Archive, the Dickinson lexicon, and periodical archives such as *The Making of America*—that are indispensable for developing the kind of historical knowingness allowing readers to place literary works within more complicated contexts. And as we do all these things, of course, you’ll get to know two of the most extraordinary people who ever lived.

Course Requirements & Policies

A series of major assignments will determine the bulk of your grade this semester. The due dates for the final drafts of two essay assignments appear on the course syllabus, as do the due dates for preliminary drafts. An in-class presentation will also factor into your grade, which I will determine at the end of the semester using this formula:

Participation	10%	
Blogging.....	10%	
In-class presentation	15%	C1
Essay #1	20%	
Midterm Exam.....	10%	
Essay #2	20%	
Final Exam.....	15%	
	100%	

Our class blog available on the course page under MyASU will provide class members a place to trade perceptions of the poems we're reading this semester. Here is a place for you to exercise your skills in close reading: by making careful observations about the ways these poets use language and form to produce interesting phenomena of meaning, students will develop a semester-long conversation whose outcomes I couldn't possibly predict right now. Note that blogging well in this sense requires you to pay close attention to what's on the page, to base your claims around the language of Whitman and Dickinson. This is to say that this blog isn't primarily about us—it's about them, and so your contributions should offer insights, hypotheses, guesses, or statements about how Dickinson's and Whitman's poetry "works" by drawing attention to the words, meters, rhythms, images, metaphors, or other literary effects on the page. Also note that before we can talk about what a poem "means," we have to be able to establish what it *says*.

C1
C2

In-class presentations will be given by one or two class members and will focus upon an historical context that may prove useful as we attempt to place Dickinson's and Whitman's poetry within its cultural surround. These presentations should strive to do two things: (1) they should educate the class about the issues, events, and ideas connected with the presentation topic, and (2) they should hazard some hypothesis or set of hypotheses concerning the connection between Dickinson or Whitman's writing and the subject matter of the presentation. Handouts with bibliographies (composed in accordance with MLA citation format) should accompany these presentations, so that class members can leave with useful notes and a guide for further research. When one student makes a presentation alone, it should last about 15 minutes. When two students make the presentation together, it should last about 25 minutes and both presenters should take equal charge of the proceedings. In such cases of joint presentation, team members should provide me a written statement of how labor was divided (e.g. who researched what; who created the handout; who was responsible for visual accompaniments, etc.).

C1
C2

Our two essays will connect the poetry we read with the historical circumstances of its production. In this way, these essays will forward a thesis-driven argument about that poetry and how it produces meaning by engaging wider dimensions of U.S. culture. Note that this procedure tends to discard more venerable accounts of literary “genius” according to which authors isolate themselves from the public sphere (a trope that has appeared particularly applicable to Dickinson for a bit too long). The first essay will be approximately eight pages long, will focus upon Whitman and is due on February 25 (a preliminary draft will be due on February 16). The second essay will also be about eight pages long, will focus upon Dickinson, and will be due on April 28 (with a preliminary draft due on April 14). More detailed descriptions of both these assignments will be forthcoming, soon.

C1
C2
C3

Class Citizenship

I expect students to model strong class citizenship in this course, working hard to press forward as we read and discuss Dickinson, Whitman, and their place within the antebellum period. To be a strong class citizen: (1) you should read, and as you read you should form ideas, draw connections, raise problems, and take notes on what you’re thinking; (2) you should plan on participating—at least making a comment or asking a question—every single day; (3) you should be careful not to dominate discussion (i.e., those of you who are not shy should give other students an opening to participate), and you should participate with tact and civility (take other people’s remarks and questions seriously, don’t interrupt, respond courteously, etc.). The grade for participation will depend upon meeting all these criteria. I will tend to lavish encouragement on students who engage as strong class citizens. I will tend to become annoyed with students who never have anything to offer or who seem feckless. And leaving my displeasure aside, being a successful, hard-working participator virtually guarantees that the rest of the course will go well for you. Showing up sullen and silent all but guarantees you won’t foster the kind of engagement you need to do well with these difficult texts. I should also mention that students who hold forth without having read aren’t fooling anyone.

Attendance

With three absences, students will be considered overcut. Overcutting may result in the reduction of the final course grade by a grade or more, depending upon frequency. In the case of an excused absence (as defined by ASU university-wide policy), your excuse must be made in writing, accompanied by the appropriate documentation, and given to me no later than the first class meeting following the absence. This is the *only* way to avoid losing credit for an absence—voicemail messages and so on do not replace written documentation. In no case may a student accumulate more than three absences, either excused or unexcused, and still pass the course—if illness or other extenuating circumstances cause you to miss more than three classes, you should petition for a withdrawal.

Student Support and Disability Accommodations

In compliance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, professional disability specialists and support staff at the Disability Resource Center (DRC) offer a range of academic support services and accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. I also invite you to contact me if you qualify for any of these services, and if you believe you should qualify for special arrangements in this course. I am more than happy to oblige any recommendations the DRC makes in this area.

Etc.

Students who habitually show up for class a few minutes after it's started should find a professor who's into that and take their course instead. This professor finds it irritating and reacts badly.

Generally, I don't give extensions. That said, there are of course sometimes truly insurmountable circumstances that absolutely prevent a student from completing a paper on time. In such cases, students will provide a full account in writing, and I may then decide to give an extension. But note that in such instances, I will expect to see the extra time reflected in the final draft – assignments that have been given an extension are read with an even more demanding eye than those that have not. Lastly: in order to be granted an extension, students must contact me at least two days before the assignment's due date.

Students are of course responsible for knowing Arizona State University regulations and policies regarding academic honesty. Plagiarism, even if unknowing or accidental, can result in your failing the course and in further action by the university.

If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, feel free to ask me to clarify. Also, please make a point of noting the following: I will not tolerate any form of academic dishonesty in this course. If I come to suspect misconduct of any kind, I will become dogged about rooting it out, and if my suspicions are confirmed, I will dispense appropriate penalties.

Required Texts

Emily Dickinson. *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*.
Walt Whitman. *Leaves of Grass*. 1855 edition.

Schedule

	Tues 1/12	Introductions, course overview
	Thurs 1/14	Walt Whitman, "Resurgemus" (1850) Emily Dickinson, Letter to Thomas Wentworth Higginson, 15 April 1862
1855: Walt Whitman's Leaves of Grass	Tues 1/19	Read Walt Whitman, <i>Leaves of Grass</i> , Preface
	Thurs 1/21	<i>LOG</i> , cantos 1-6
	Tues 1/26	continue discussion of <i>LOG</i> , cantos 1-6 Report: Walt Whitman's biography
	Thurs 1/28	<i>LOG</i> , cantos 7-13 Report: The Fugitive Slave Law of 1850
	Tues 2/2	<i>LOG</i> , cantos 14-20 Report: The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854
	Thurs 2/4	<i>LOG</i> , cantos 21-26 Report: Landscape Painting of the 1840s and 50s
	Tues 2/9	<i>LOG</i> , cantos 27-33 Report: Ralph Waldo Emerson
	Thurs 2/11	<i>LOG</i> , cantos 34-40 Report: Opera in New York during the 1850s
	Tues 2/16	<i>LOG</i> , cantos 41-45 Report: The postal system and abolition, 1840-55 First draft, Essay 1 due
	Thurs 2/18	<i>LOG</i> , cantos 46-52

	Tues 2/23	Whitman, "A Voice From the Sea," 1860	
	Thurs 2/25	Essay 1 due Bring Dickinson, <i>Complete Poems</i>	C4
1862: 366 poems by Emily Dickinson	Tues 3/1	Dickinson, poems 258, 280, 288, 1071, 1129	
	Thurs 3/3	Dickinson, poems 299-330 Report: Emily Dickinson's biography	
	3/6 - 3/13	Spring break - no class meetings	
	Tues 3/15	Dickinson, poems 331-360 Report: Amherst, Massachusetts in the 1850s and 60s	
	Thurs 3/17	Dickinson, poems 361-390 Report: Congregationalist Christianity	
	Tues 3/22	Dickinson, poems 391-420 Report: Poetry in <i>The Atlantic Monthly</i>	
	Thurs 3/24	Dickinson, poems 421-450 Report: Birds and Birdsong in the antebellum period	
	Tues 3/29	Dickinson, poems 451-480 Report: The Civil War in 1862	
	Thurs 3/31	Dickinson, poems 481-510 Report: Battlefield photography and journalism	
	Tues 4/5	Dickinson, poems 511-540 Report: The domestic sphere in wartime	
	Thurs 4/7	Dickinson, poems 541-570 Report: Transformations in funerary practices, 1861-65	
Tues 4/12	Dickinson, poems 571-600 Report: Thomas Wentworth Higginson		

Thurs 4/14	Dickinson, poems 661-630 First draft, Essay 2 due	C4
Tues 4/19	Dickinson, poems 631-660	
Thurs 4/21	Dickinson, poems 661-665	
Tues 4/26	no class meeting conferences in my office	
Thurs 4/28	Thomas Lux, "Walt Whitman's Brain Dropped on Laboratory Floor" Billie Collins, "Undressing Emily Dickinson." Essay 2 due	C4

Final exam date and time TBA

Essay #2: Emily Dickinson: Private Poet in the Public Sphere

ENG 441: Whitman and Dickinson

Length: 8 pages or about 2000 words

First draft due: 14 April

Final copy due: 28 April

One commonplace about Emily Dickinson is that, supposedly, she was an intensely private person whose withdrawal into her home—something that really only happened in the later years of her life, by the way—signals her lifelong eschewal of the public sphere. In other words, we're all supposed to believe that Dickinson was a kind of intellectual hermit, that she kept her distance from the welter of ideas, conversations, concerns, politics, ideologies, events, inventions, discoveries, controversies, fashions, and trends that made up American culture over the course of her life. It seems to me that there are two things we should say concerning this thesis about Dickinson. For one thing, it's unsupportable—even if it *weren't* the case that Dickinson *was* well-traveled, by nineteenth-century standards, and even if she *wasn't* an avid reader of contemporary literature as well as of the most important periodicals of her day, and even if her father *wasn't* a successful state and national politician and even if her grandfather *didn't* co-found one of the most prestigious undergraduate institutions of higher learning in the world, all kinds of evidence suggests that Dickinson thought with intensity about the culture around her. But perhaps worse than being unsupportable, the idea that Dickinson wasn't engaged with her culture is patronizing. I suspect this notion about Dickinson appeals to some of her readers for the same reason many of us like to refer to her as “Emily” even while nobody refers to Walt Whitman as “Walt.” Calling her by her surname infantilizes her; it's a way to avoid taking her seriously by treating her as if when she addresses us, she does so as little girl—little “Emily,” whose entire world consisted of her father's house and her beloved garden. The same might be said about the desire many readers have to construct Dickinson as the isolated, eccentric spinster—if we pretend that here was a person who turned from the momentous historical period during which she lived, maybe we can also avoid dealing with Dickinson as a complex person who challenged her culture and deserves a place in the intellectual history of the country.

For this essay, I'm asking you to choose one or two closely related poems from Dickinson's enormous 1862 output and then treat them as poems that refract, comment upon, fret over, or other wise engage some facet of the state of American public life that year. That is to say, rather than considering Dickinson's poem a “timeless” “masterpiece,” and so on, I'm asking you to present it as an expression of its own historical period, something bound to a moment, something today's reader cannot fully understand unless they learn a lot about what was happening in the American mind circa 1862.

In order to do this persuasively, you should think in terms of an essay that “pans in” to some key detail of the poem, some apparently minor motif, metaphor, image, or figure of speech—some small aspect of the poem that you can then argue is fundamental to the way in which the poem produces meaning. And you should do this by showing how the poem re-circulates and comments upon ideas and concerns already at play in the culture during the years immediately surrounding 1862. Your job in this essay, in other words, is to excite your reader about Dickinson by educating them about the era in which she wrote, and showing how the poem you've chosen engages wider issues in interesting, even transformative ways.

So you'll be citing some lines from Dickinson (it might be permissible to quote a whole poem, depending on how long it is), but you'll also be working with other primary sources from the period, documents you've uncovered in the electronic historical archives with which we've been working already (the *Making of America* sites at Cornell and the University of Michigan, *Harper's Weekly*, and Wright's American Fiction are just some of the nineteenth-century American archives we have at our disposal). We've been trading quite a bit of information about Dickinson's culture already, and we'll continue to do so. But this project gives you a chance to hone in much further, to isolate some key issue and then show how Dickinson deals with it.

Your first draft, due April 14, should be to length. This will put you on good footing to do an actual “revision”—that is, not simply checking spelling and fiddling here and there, but actually re-writing big sections, making this your best possible work.

A few reminders, stylistic and otherwise:

- Remember to embed your quotes and to present them using that three-step process we've gone over.
- Eschew long-winded openings. There's just no need to open up by complementing Dickinson, by telling us how timeless or masterful she is. Instead, let the rubber hit the road right away by pointing out something interesting and explaining *why* it's so interesting.
- Educate your reader. What makes actual (i.e., not imaginary) readers stick with an essay is their sense that it's making them smarter. Teach your reader something about American culture they didn't know before. And use Dickinson to complicate and enrich that lesson.
- Remember to cite your quotes and paraphrases using the MLA system.
- Research, research, research. If you don't know anything interesting, you can't say anything interesting. We are extremely fortunate to have access to the online periodical archives at Fletcher Library at our disposal. Use them to become an expert on the era of 1862.
- Ask yourself at every step: What am I arguing? How does the paragraph, the sentence, the *word* I'm putting on the page help me to help my reader understand that argument? Also: Is this statement about Dickinson the thing I'm arguing require an argument? In other words, am I teaching a real reader something, or am I rehearsing something a casual reader (in other words, not someone steeped in the kind of research you're doing) might have thought already?

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