

English 433/533

Annotated Bibliography

Due Date: November 9

Length: Approximately 10 pages for graduate students. Approximately 5 pages for undergraduate students.

Before you write your final paper for this course, you must first research the current state of scholarship on your paper topic. Your final paper will take into account what has already been written by professional literary scholars on the topic of your choice.

Undergraduate students are required to include 5 scholarly sources in their annotated bibliography and 10 scholarly sources in their final paper. Graduate students are required to include 10 scholarly sources in their annotated bibliography and 15 scholarly sources in their final paper. If you need assistance in using the MLA database, let me know. The following are some basic guidelines.

- First, use the MLA database to research a particular topic.
 - You can reach the database via the UMKC library homepage: <http://www.umkc.edu/lib/> - click “Databases” under “Research Tools” > on the next page, click “M” > on the next page, scroll down and click “MLA International Database.” If you are off campus, you may be asked to enter your UMKC user name and password; use the same information you use to log into your UMKC email account.
- Next, from what you’ve found choose critical works concerning your topic.
 - In choosing, your bias should be towards recent (previous ten years) rather than earlier works, but if you find an earlier work that seems particularly important or influential, include that in your bibliography.
 - Don’t just pick the first five or ten works you find: take some time to select interesting and provocative scholarship. You might just scan an introductory paragraph or two to check out a work before you commit to including it in your bibliography. Often a work that seems interesting as listed in the MLA database turns out to be a dud.
 - Book reviews and brief notes are ineligible for this assignment.
- Finally, write up an annotation of roughly 200-250 words (a page or so) for each of the items in your bibliography.
 - Make sure that each of your annotations provides not only an adequate summary of what a particular work of criticism says but also a thoughtful assessment of the quality of that work. Be alert to a critic’s assumptions, biases, and methodology.
 - Get to the point quickly. Do not write an overly long annotation. Identify the main thesis of the your source and focus only on the main points.

Articles or Books? You probably won’t have time to read many books, but you will be able to assess a book for this assignment without reading it cover to cover. We’ll discuss strategies in class (e.g. Read the introduction carefully, scan the table of contents, scan the index, read what look like relevant sections). Graduate students in the class are *required* to include at least one book in their annotated bibliography.