

A good paper in English 2080 (as in many other courses)

- addresses a real problem or question arising from course readings and viewings, class discussion, the assignment, and its writer's judgment and experience. (Write on a topic listed on the sheet of prompts. If you want to do something else, consult with the instructor or reader.)

- maintains a position or thesis reflecting its writer's own judgment — an interesting and probably complex thesis from which intelligent people could learn, perhaps by disagreeing with it. In other words, it doesn't simply "track" or summarize the text(s).

- supports and develops that position with *plenty* of appropriately interpreted detail from the texts it discusses. (These texts can be plays, films, the introductory matter in the Norton, critical articles, or other resources.) Detail is crucial: you must show readers the bases of your judgment as you develop them on the page. Critical essays live or die on their thoughtful interpretations of concrete details from the text[s].

- discusses the issues with critical detachment. (References to "the truth and universality of Shakespeare's dramatic art" will fall on deaf ears. Jocular mention of "the Bard," by the way, will induce projectile vomiting in many readers.)

- is original in thought and language, i.e. is your own work except for material drawn from sources, which it fully and explicitly acknowledges. Representing another's work as your own is plagiarism, an infraction of the Academic Integrity Code, which you can consult at <http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/Academic/AIC.html>. In English 2080, the normal penalty for a first infraction of the Code is an "F" in the course.

- makes reference, for all material drawn from sources, in a clear and uniform way. Use a "Works Cited and Consulted" list at the end of the essay, and use MLA-style parenthetical reference throughout. Here's a model for quoting from and making reference to plays in the Norton using act, scene, and line numbers:

Exclaims Juliet, "I'll to my wedding bed. / And death, not Romeo, take my maidenhead" (3.2.136-7). And later, Romeo asks, at the end of his life,

Ah, dear Juliet
Why art thou yet so fair? Shall I believe
That unsubstantial death is amorous
And that the lean abhorred monster keeps
Thee here in the dark to be his paramour? (5.3.101-5)

Both lovers, in varying degrees, strive for what one writer calls "not the satisfaction of love, but its passion" (de Rougemont 15-16).

Works Cited. Every essay must include a “Works Cited and Consulted” list. It is your contract with the reader, informing her of what editions of common texts you’ve used and what additional material you’ve consulted.

Works Cited and Consulted

(a few examples)

de Rougemont, Denis. Love in the Western World. Trans. Montgomery Belgion. New York: Fawcett, 1966. 15-16. English 2080 website, spring 2010.
<<http://instruct1.cit.cornell.edu/Courses/engl2080/208.scholia29.html>>. 1 February 2009.

Gibaldi, Joseph. MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. 6th ed. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2003,

“Romeo and Juliet.” 15 February 2008. Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia. 12 February 2007. 2 April 2009.
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romeo_and_Juliet>.

Shakespeare, William. King Lear (Conflated Text). The Norton Shakespeare. Ed Stephen Greenblatt et al. 2nd edition. New York: W.W. Norton, 2008. 2: 759-834.

Zapf, Justin. “King Lear.” Justin’s A+ Term Paper Website. 1 April 2006. 1 April 2010.
<<http://home.earthlink.net/~justinz/ShakespeareEssay>>. [What’s Justin doing here? Has the writer cited him? Well, if any part of the writer’s work owes anything to Justin, that must be referenced in the text and cited in the “W.C. & C.” list]

(The second date in an electronic citation is date on which you last accessed it.)