

Sequence One: Major Paper Conference Memo

engl 111 / sec. G / winter quarter 2011-12 / chang



You have been introduced to the major paper assignment for the quarter, which asks you to expand, complicate, or challenge what you started in the first sequence short papers and carry on through the second sequence. You have done several readings (hopefully read them more than once) that have introduced the concepts of an academic claim, of rhetorical reading, and the work of cultural studies. You have had some practice with reading and analyzing writing and other cultural productions.

Continue thinking about the major paper project. What will be your central claim? What is your position on the reading of and teaching of and thinking about *Harry Potter*? What evidence, support, or resources have you found to strengthen and articulate your argument? In other words, what does *Harry Potter* tell us, the reader of your analysis, about

ourselves, our culture, our world? Obviously, you are not going to be able to write about everything you discover. Choose what is most interesting, most compelling to you. Also choose what you can support with the readings and with outside research.

To help you concisely articulate your major paper claim and your writing plan for the major paper, you will draft a research proposal memorandum (or memo) to bring with you to your conference (along with a claim worksheet, initial research, and any other pertinent materials). Memorandums (as used in the business and bureaucratic world) are brief, precise, information or data rich, semi-formal to formal, and purposeful pieces of technical writing. Memos usually use block format and contain:

- 1) DATE:
- 2) TO:
- 3) FROM:
- 4) SUBJECT:
- 5) One to five block paragraphs, single spaced, that cover main points, relevant information, and necessary details concisely and to-the-point.

A research proposal considers your overall topic ideas, your research question, research process, and sources and scaffolds what the next steps will be for the project. Many disciplines require written proposals before an experiment can be run, before a presentation can be made, before a seminar paper can be written. Research proposals can vary in length and scope. However, in general, all share certain conventions: framing of the project and putting the project in context or conversation with other research; a tentative claim or thesis or hypothesis; an approach or methodology; target audience; and tentative sources or references. For your conference, prepare a 1-page memo written to me that:

- 1) your specific paper topic establishing a working claim and exigence.
- 2) a very brief outline of the paper and possible subclaims, perhaps noting a key resource of two
- 3) proposes why the paper is viable, doable, and appropriate,
- 4) raises any specific questions you may have about your claim, your analysis, or your research.

You may also want to supplement your explanation with what additional research you have started. Be certain to bring the texts you are working with to your conference. Be prepared to discuss your memo and your major paper at your conference.

Targeted outcomes: 1, 2, 3

Turn in: 12 inches, memo format, typed, no title page, single-spaced
major paper claim worksheet
Draft Due: Monday, January 30, e-copy
Final Due: at your major paper conference