

Coverage Doesn't Cut It: Information Literacy and the Literary Survey Course

Criteria for information literacy grants at Lafayette College

- Classes above the 100-level
- Include projects in which students gather, evaluate, and use information
- Involve collaboration with a librarian
- Provide opportunities for students to do at least one of the following
 - Discover that the information they use exists within a framework developed to record, store, and access it and that research allows them to tap into an ongoing conversation among scholars;
 - Critically examine the research process;
 - Explore the economic, social, legal, and ethical issues surrounding information in today's society.
- Info lit work should be part of students' grades

For more information, see <<http://library.lafayette.edu/instruction/infolitgrants>>.

Assignments from other information literacy courses

Questions for interviews with scientists

- Could you tell us about the research project you're currently working on? Where did you get the idea for this project?
- How did you get started? Did you consult other experts or their work during your project design?
- Are you collaborating with others on the project?
- How long will you be working on this? Where and how do you intend to share your research findings?
- What are the most important information sources for your research (e.g. journals, meetings, people, etc)? How do you keep up-to-date with your field?

Portions of literature review exercise to help students identify major journals and important works

1. Do the articles that you've found cite any of the same sources or any of the same authors? If so, create a list of those sources.
2. Create a list of authors with more than one work cited in each of the original articles.
3. Create a list of journal titles from which more than one article is cited in each of your original articles.
4. Do any of the authors express opinions about the quality of the sources they're citing or point to discrepancies or inconsistencies among the sources cited? If so, provide some examples.
5. Choose two sources cited in any of these articles that you judge to be particularly important.
 - a) Explain why you identified these two sources as important.
 - b) Perform a cited reference search for each of these articles in Web of Science. Does the number of times they've been cited reveal anything about their importance?
6. Choose two sources cited in any of these articles that are closely related to the topic that you are researching. Perform searches for the authors of these works in EconLit. Do these searches turn up any additional works on your topic that you haven't already seen?

RECEPTION HISTORY

ASSIGNMENT SHEET

We've talked a bit about the history behind how some of our texts have been interpreted. Lots of questions remain unanswered, however: how did works like the Declaration become literature? How did Edward Taylor's poetry change the way people thought about Puritan literature? Have different versions of Franklin's *Autobiography* received different interpretations, or do critics agree what Franklin's text is about? These are just a few questions you might consider pursuing for this assignment. Here's what you'll do to construct this essay:

1. Choose one text from our course—whether we've read it yet or not (e.g., one poem, a journal, a novel, a story, an essay).
2. Using databases available through the Lafayette libraries, locate and read at least three articles that are each from a different decade—at least one should be before 1970.
3. Based on your research, write a 4-5pp. essay in which you
 - Construct a narrative describing & analyzing the history of your text's interpretation
 - Make an argument accounting for the changes you see over time
4. As you work on this project, you are also to keep an online research journal (logistics will be explained in class) in which you record decisions you make regarding research (choosing a text, doing searches, integrating research into writing, etc.) and reflecting on what information literacy you had to use to undertake each of those tasks. Terese Heidenwolf and/or Prof. Phillips will comment on your journals.

This assignment is part of the information literacy component of our course, and that shapes the goals of what you're supposed to learn and accomplish:

- Gain a working understanding of online database research techniques in literature, as well as a basic understanding of the principles and history that organize the knowledge available through those databases;
- Familiarize yourself with academic criticism written in different eras, noticing some of the changes in writing conventions and uses of evidence;
- Practice in forming academic arguments, as well as developing theories about the history of information access and use.

Your essay should be double-spaced with 12pt. font and 1" margins. Cite all sources (including your text) in MLA format, using in-text citations (not footnotes) and a works cited list.

You're invited to meet with either Terese Heidenwolf or Prof. Phillips to discuss research procedures, drafts, etc. Final drafts are due **Friday, March 28** by 1pm on Moodle. Save files in either MS Word (.doc, not .docx) or .rtf format.

**ENGLISH 212
MINI-ANTHOLOGY
ASSIGNMENT SHEET**

For the final assignment in our course, you'll try your hand at practicing the subtle art of anthologizing. This is your chance to explore texts that we haven't been able to read, to re-cluster texts that we have, or to follow up on an author, genre, or theme that caught your attention during this course. Here are the parameters:

1. Choose an organizing idea for your anthology—this could be thematic (nature writing), formal (ballads), temporal (1790s, early 19th century), regional (New England, Virginia, Western), and/or identity-based (African-American, women's writing). You can choose anything from North America from the time period of our course (c. 1492-1922), and it need not have been addressed during class time.
2. Select 3 or 4 texts (preferably poems or similarly brief selections) using a variety of sources, possibly including collected works, anthologies, databases, etc.
3. Edit your texts, if more than one version exists; you may choose to include one or more variant, but you will need to think carefully about how you want those to appear on the page. A common practice is simply to reproduce the first printed version, unless the author revised it later on; consult with Prof. Phillips for guidance if you need to edit your pieces.
4. Annotate your texts, writing notes like the *Norton Anthology* uses to explain points of difficulty for your reader. This might include defining unfamiliar words, identifying historical or biographical references, or pointing out sources for allusions or quotations. Be sure to use reliable sources from library stacks and databases, or verified sources on the Internet (Wikipedia doesn't count for this assignment).
5. Write a 3-4pp. critical preface for your anthology, in which you contextualize your selections in a way that you think would most help your readers (imagine the next English 212 class, at the start of their semester, as your audience). This may include biographical information, historical context, information about similar works, formal or theoretical background, critical interpretations of the texts, etc.
5. Meet one-on-one with Terese Heidenwolf to discuss your research in locating texts and background information. Before meeting with Ms. Heidenwolf, send her a memo (heidenwt@lafayette.edu) describing what you've already done to locate materials, what you still want to accomplish in your research, and what questions you have.
6. Write a memo to Prof. Phillips by **Monday, April 28** describing your plans for your anthology and any problems or questions on which you'd like his input; you are strongly encouraged, though not required, to meet with him during the last two weeks of class to discuss your anthology.

The final document or portfolio may be submitted either electronically or in hard copy; it should include the following items, which should amount to around 12-15pp. maximum (it might be shorter):

- a.) A title page, including your name the title of your anthology.
- b.) A 3-4pp. critical preface in which you give your reader an introduction to the texts in your mini-anthology—you may discuss author biographies, historical context, reception history, etc.
- c.) 3 or 4 edited and annotated texts.
- d.) A works cited page giving sources for your preface and annotations.
- e.) A 1pp. reflection on the choices you made to create your anthology; include 1-2 sentences on how you developed your information literacy through this assignment.

The final document/portfolio is due by **5pm on Thursday, May 15**. While it is not a significant factor in the grade, you are encouraged to add whatever design elements (illustrations, creative page layout, cover, etc.) you wish to your anthology. Again, keep your audience in mind—what would look appealing to the next English 212 class?

N.B.: In lieu of a journal for the final assignment, your memos to Ms. Heidenwolf and Prof. Phillips and your 1pp. reflection in the anthology document/portfolio will count toward your journal grade for the semester.