RESEARCH PROJECT
Instructor: Dr. Beth Howells

Your assignment is to write a research paper on one of the following four texts: Elizabeth Bishop’s “One Art,” Toni Cade Bambara's “The Lesson,” Tennesee Williams' The Glass Menagerie, or Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s “The Yellow Wallpaper.”

The first three texts are featured as Critical Casebooks with resources excerpted in Chapter 15 of our textbook. If you choose the latter text by Gilman, let me know and I will print and copy a Critical Casebook for you. These casebooks will help get you started on your research.

The Process:

1. First, you will need to read these works carefully identifying what surprises you, intrigues you, confuses you about each of the texts. What stands out to you? What do you have questions about? What sort of thesis could you develop? Read carefully, mark important passages, and take note of key ideas.

2. Once you have done that you will want to identify a preliminary thesis or question about one of the texts and the moments in the text that either support that thesis idea or relate to your question. Be sure to think back on our discussions and reading about what a thesis is—it must be a claim you are staking, an assertion you are making, something that needs proving to be true. If it is too obvious, there is no need for research. And be sure to consider the difference between topic and thesis as we have been discussing.

3. For example, Elizabeth Bishop uses and revises the villanelle form. You might argue how and why and then investigate how critics have discussed her usage of the form.

4. Bambara offers a kind of social commentary in narrative form. You might examine the text from a Marxist perspective and compare your discussion to those by other critics.

5. Williams' The Glass Menagerie has been interpreted dramatically many times over the years. You might compare and contrast two interpretations and reviews of those interpretations particularly in light of the contemporary context of these dramatic versions.


7. After you have read the text closely and have a focused idea in mind, you can then turn to the research. You will want to engage in focused and selective research of the kind our reference librarian is describing. Use our library’s resources to identify the most reliable and pointed discussions of your particular topic.

8. Again, to reiterate, you will want to identify the 5 to 7 BEST academic sources on your topic, not random web pages, not general news stories, not biographical descriptions, not general plot summaries—rather academic, peer-reviewed critical analyses that can help bolster your argument.

9. You will need to select and read your sources carefully, highlighting pertinent passages and taking notes.
10. Once you have performed a close reading of the story and the sources, you will want to refine your thesis: what claim will you stake, what assertion can you make, what is something that you can prove to be true? This is your thesis. Create an outline detailing what support/sources you will use.

11. As we have been discussing all term, your introduction should hook your reader in and introduce the topic, then assert your thesis.

12. Your body paragraphs should be made up of transitions that connect the idea at hand back to your thesis. These should be developed through summary, paraphrase, and direct quotation from the story as well as the critical sources as support.

13. You should have a conclusion that restates the main idea and emphasizes the implications of your topic.

14. Finally, as always and especially for your final project, you will want to polish your final draft perfectly—proofread and edit carefully. Visit the Writing Center if you have any concerns.

The final project will be worth 30% and will consist of an annotated bibliography worth 5%, and a research paper 25%. Your formal writing will constitute 75% of your final grade.

Your annotated bibliography should consist of 3-5 sentences summarizing the main argument of each critical text and its use for your individual project.

**The Schedule:**
The In class: reflection on paper writing process, group work for presentation

**T** PAPER 3 DUE; MEET IN LIBRARY ROOM 130; Rd in Part IV Research for Writing Chapter 13 Developing a Topic and Stating a Thesis

**Th** LIBRARY DAY—COMPLETE LIBRARY ASSIGNMENT IN LIBRARY; Rd Chapter 14, Finding and Evaluating Sources

**T** BRING A RESOURCE FROM YOUR LIBRARY SEARCH TO CLASS—It can be a chapter from a book you have checked out or the print out of an article. Bring this complete resource to class; Rd chosen section in Chapter 15 Understanding Critical Perspectives; In Class: discussion of topics and research, developing annotated bibliography

**Th** Rd. Chapter 16 Integrating Primary and Secondary Sources and Chapter 17 Using the MLA Style of Documentation. In Class: discussion of bibliographies and drafts

**T** WORKSHOP, RESEARCH PAPER DRAFT DUE

**Th** RESEARCH PAPER FINAL PAPER DUE
PLAGIARISM

Students at AASU must agree to abide by the Honor Code and Code of Conduct found in the appendix to the catalog. Be aware that plagiarism can result in dismissal from the university, failure of the course, or failure of an assignment. Cite any sources you use at any time in this class whether you are quoting directly or paraphrasing. See me or consult the Armstrong Atlantic State University Handbook if you are ever uncertain about the issue. Plagiarism will not be tolerated.