

IAS 290 final project - Comparative literary study.

Objectives

1. Explore an issue in IAS using literature as a primary source.
2. Read critically the literary production of different cultural communities.
3. Draw productive comparisons between works by authors of different regions.
4. Discover what contributions creative works can make to your thinking on global and regional issues.

Requirements

- 10-12 pages, double-spaced (no crazy fonts or font sizes).
- May use MLA or Chicago style, but be consistent.
- Formal essay format: Introduction, Body, Conclusion.
- At least two works of literature from two different regions (Western Europe, Africa, Middle East, East Asia, South Asia, Latin America/Caribbean). At least one work must be from outside the class readings.
- Secondary sources must include peer-reviewed articles and/or books from scholarly presses, and can also include other sources.
- List of Works Cited must conform to your citation style choice.

Steps

1. Think of an issue or cluster of issues that interest you as an IAS major (migrations, nationalism/globalism, development, language, poverty, religion, human rights... the list goes on and on).
2. If you have books in mind, start reading. If you do not know anything about the literary production of your region, you should:
 - a. Consult the library for anthologies and edited volumes.
 - b. Ask faculty
 - c. Consult databases (MLA, WorldCat, etc.) armed with your keywords, although in this case you have to resort to advanced searching techniques.
3. Generate ideas:
 - a. Brainstorming – automatic writing
 - b. Webbing
4. Determine your thesis.
5. Research. Gather secondary sources from MLA database primarily. Work doggedly on this in order to have time to order things from ILL or MelCat. Do not trust Google or Wikipedia or other free and open sources on the Internet. Gauge the reliability of online material.
6. OUTLINE. Includes title, thesis, ideas/arguments that develop thesis and conclusion. Experiment with the order and progression of your arguments at this stage.
7. DRAFT. An academic essay has an introduction, body and conclusion. The length of each part may vary, however an introduction or conclusion consisting of two or three sentences is never acceptable.
 - a. The introduction should (not always in this order):
 - i. Capture the interest of the reader
 - ii. Identify texts, authors, topic
 - iii. Present necessary background info
 - iv. Define any key terms to your thesis
 - v. Establish parameters/limits
 - vi. Present your thesis (problem you are going to solve)
 - vii. Indicate how you will proceed

- b. The body should:
 - i. Develop your ideas in a logical way
 - ii. Treat different ideas in different paragraphs
 - iii. Supply the examples and evidence necessary. Remember to cite both direct quotes and any summary or allusion to another's work
 - iv. Always keep the topic and thesis in mind to avoid unnecessary detours.
 - c. The conclusion should:
 - i. Reaffirm the thesis with a brief summary of your ideas
 - ii. Articulate a judgment on the implications of your thesis beyond the strict confines of your paper.
 - iii. Give an impression of closure. The tone and content should indicate that you have fulfilled the obligations you set for yourself in the intro.
 - iv. AVOID:
 - 1. Last-minute ideas and new information
 - 2. Rhetorical questions that point to new problems
 - 3. Drawings or doodles of any kind
 - 4. "The End"
8. REVISE.
- a. Structure. Are the logic and order you began with still the most suitable? Are the introduction and conclusion in dialogue? Do they both coincide with the body?
 - b. Cohesion. Use transition words and paragraphs to properly link your chain of ideas. The judicious repetition of key words or their synonyms can also lend cohesion. Though too must repetition is a stylistic error that must be avoided.
 - c. Style. Academic writing should be clear and explicit, but that does not mean it should be boring.
 - i. The majority of your sentences will be long and complex (the inclusion of subordinate clauses), but use short, staccato sentences on rare occasions to create impact.
 - ii. Vary word and clause order. A variety of sentence structures maintains the interest of the reader.
 - iii. Vary your use of passive and active voice.
 - d. Grammar/spelling/punctuation. Strive for perfection here. It lends authority.
 - e. Citations and notes. Properly cite primary and secondary sources, traditional and electronic ones, direct and indirect quotes. Make sure your list of Works Cited is complete.

Adapted from:

- Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb and Joseph M. Williams. The Craft of Research. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.
- Faingold, Eduardo D. Código de composición. Guía para escribir trabajos. Munich, Germany: Lincom Europa, 2002.
- Gibaldi, Joseph. MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. Fifth Edition. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2003.
- Lester, James D. and James Lester, Jr. Writing Research Papers: A Complete Guide. New York: Longman, 2002.
- Soles, Derek. Writing an Academic Essay: How to Plan, Draft, Revise and Write Essays. Somerset, Great Britain: Studymates, 2003.
- . The Essentials of Academic Writing. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2005.