

Short Paper 1.4: Major Paper Conference Memo

engl 131 / sec. 0 / autumn quarter 2010-11 / chang



You have been introduced to the major paper assignment for the first sequence, which asks you to expand, complicate, or challenge what you started in your short papers and the first sequence readings. These ideas, critiques, and analytical lenses will be carried on through the second sequence. Hopefully by this point, you have gone back to the novels to look for significant passages, you have had a chance to read the class's secondary readings a few times, and you have been researching your topic.

Now it is time to work on your major paper's main claim. What is your goal, your exigence for this paper? What question are you asking about *Harry Potter*? What is your position on the reading of and teaching of and thinking about

Harry Potter? What do you think the books are "doing" in terms of the cultural and identificatory interventions we have been talking about in class? Why is it important to read, analyze, and write about *Harry Potter*? What evidence, support, or resources have you found to strengthen and articulate your argument? 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.

Goals and Outcomes

To help you concisely articulate your major paper claim and your writing plan for the major paper, you will draft a 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.

For your conference, prepare a 1-page memo written to me that selectively:

- 1) expresses a working claim for your major paper and proposes why you believe it to be a reasonable and viable argument and why the paper is worth researching.
- 2) supplements your claim with two or three short quotes or other evidence that help elaborate where your final paper is going.
- 3) briefly outlines your paper and possible sub-claims.
- 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: 11 inches, memo format, typed, no title page, single-spaced
major paper claim worksheet

Draft Due: Monday, October 25

Final Due: at your major paper conference