

Math 5 – Final Paper

Since our course is subtitled “Mathematics in Literature and Cinema”, the final paper, at its core, should reflect this. That is to say, the final paper should be about something **mathematical** and how it appears in a certain pieces of literature or cinema.

Guidelines:

- (1) The final paper should be informed by at least two mathematical pieces (books or films approved by the professor) that are not part of the nine books/films/play we used for the course.
- (2) The final paper should also be informed by at least one of the nine books/films/play we used for the course.
- (3) The paper’s focus should tie into one of the three main units we covered during the course (plot, character or setting/structure).
- (4) If the pieces deal with an explicit area of mathematics that is relevant to the something **mathematical** you are writing about, then please include a “layperson’s” description of the area. (Please consult with the professor about this.)
- (5) The paper should be at least 2000-2200 words long. (And double-spaced.)

To earn a “high grade” will require *an original contribution of thought, reasoned arguments, and appropriate evidence from non-fictional sources*. That is, the student is expected to have something to *write* about the mathematics and its connection to the creative pieces. Originality of thought and the effectiveness of argument will be factors in determining the grade. Expectations are that students will write a well-organized essay with a clearly developed thesis. The paper should contain Foot/Endnotes and a Works Cited/Bibliography, which follows standard format (MLA, APA, AMS, MAA, etc.).

Please recall that the final paper is worth 200 points towards your course grade (which is out of 800 points).

If you have any questions about this assignment, please contact the professor.

Timeline:

1. By Friday **October 25**: Submit a proposal for your final paper. This doesn't have to be too detailed, but some forethought is expected. Specifically include:
 - An area of focus that you want to explore (at this time you need not have a fully formed thesis statement).
 - Names of four books/films from outside the course that you might want to study.
 - Names of two books/films from the course that you might use.
 - Which of plot, character or setting will be your likely focus.
 - A list of at least five potential sources (not necessarily fiction) that might support your topic/area of focus.

It is possible that the professor will want to meet to discuss/fine-tune your proposal.

2. By Monday **November 4**: Submit in a reasonably detailed outline of your final paper's argument including a fully formed thesis statement and opening paragraph and a bibliography of all of your sources; in particular please include in your bibliography, the sources you listed in item 1. that you intend to use.
3. (OPTIONAL): By Friday **November 15**: Students may turn in a draft of their essay for general feedback. (Note: for *general* feedback. The professor will NOT do a meticulous reading of the draft.) This optional submission is to give the student a sense if s/he is on the right track, if her/his arguments are sound, if her/his data supports her/his thesis statement, and to give the student a general sense of the quality of the paper's structure, writing and grammar.
4. By Friday **November 22**, at noon: Submit the final draft of your paper.