**Professor Levecq - Proposal guidelines**

Please email me the proposal (no Blackboard submission). Only Word documents, please. If you don’t meet the deadline, you won’t get credit, but I will respond to the proposal.

If I end my response with “pass,” it means you have passed the proposal. But it does not necessarily mean that your thesis is satisfactory, so feel free to keep communicating with me if you want.

The proposal consists of three parts:

**1. Brainstorming (one page, double-spaced)**

In this first part, you are doing some thinking on your own. There’s no audience here—you’re basically in a conversation with yourself. So don’t worry about style, paragraphs, etc.

**a. Which work and concept did you choose? (see assignment sheet)**

**b. Answer the following questions regarding this concept in the work you chose**:

- What importance does the concept have in the text? In what ways do I see that it is important?

- What is the author trying to say about it and about why it is important? For example, how is it defined, does it shape the characters in a particular way, does it create conflicts, does it evolve, is it associated with particular values, is it presented positively or negatively?

- Was the concept important in the author’s culture and time period? How was it viewed or understood? Was it seen differently from previous time periods?

- Is the author going along with what his culture says about it, or is he or she commenting, criticizing, or proposing something different?

- Is the concept presented in a different way from our common understanding of it today? Is it presented in a way that makes us think about the concept in a different way?

**2. Thesis statement**

Here the goal is to present the result of your reflection to a reader. Look back over your brainstorming session, and ask yourself: are there any ideas in here that are interesting enough that they will give some new insight to someone who has already read the work?

Once you find one, you can start the process of putting together your thesis statement. Your goal is now to present your insight to a reader. In order to make sure that your reader understands your argument properly from the very beginnning, your thesis statement should have the following qualities:

1. **insightful**: it says something that is not obvious, an original take you have on the text;

2. **well articulated**: it takes some time to explain the idea adequately;

3. **significant**: it states how the text makes a significant contribution to the world of ideas, i.e. it answers the “so what?” question.

In order to be able to do all this, a **thesis statement in three sentences** often works best:

1. what is your insight? what interesting idea do you think the author is conveying?

2. explain more fully what the idea consists in (this part is important because it helps you generate ideas that you will elaborate in the body of the paper—but remember: this is an explanation, not a list of items);

3. explain why you think this idea is interesting to consider.

You will probably finesse your thesis as you start writing the essay and develop more ideas.

**3. Two ideas**

Once you start writing the essay, your goal will be to convince your reader that your thesis is valid and interesting. The essay is called “analytical-argumentative,” since you will provide analysis of a text and its context in order to argue a point. In this section of the proposal, mention two ideas you will use in the body of the paper in order to develop your argument. Ideally, each of these ideas will be the main point of a paragraph.