Annie Z.:

This is a good start! See my comments below.

* Don’t forget an abstract!
* In your first introductory paragraph, spend time framing your argument a little more fully. The “Novelty Moves” handout is very useful for abstracts, but also for providing an introductory glimpse into the preexisting conversation around your paper (ecocriticism, say). What exactly is the connection between reconsidering the human-nature relationship and revisiting a reader’s own sense of identity? This needs to be spelled out more fully. Be sure your introduction provides a clear “map” of the rest of your paper!
* I think you may want to use Garrard’s essay to flesh out your assumption section on nature. You also may want to link this section with your sections on identity. What connections are you making here between identity, nature, self-identification, dominance, etc.?
* As you spell out your lens, spend more time explaining the specific parameters of Appiah’s, Garrard’s, and Wahrman’s arguments that you’ll use. Use direct quotations from these authors (to avoid misrepresentation), explain how these arguments bolster your own, and give your reader a preview of how you’ll specifically apply these theories to your particular textual analysis.
* Spend time with your textual analysis! You have a nice start here. With each example, consider: are there variant interpretations of this passage, in terms of the specific arguments I’m making? Why are my interpretations still valid or interesting?
* See my general comments below!

**Speculative Fiction Contribution Hints and Reminders for Everyone**

**Abstract**

Don’t forget your abstract! The “Novelty Moves” handout can be very useful for concisely situating your specific argument within an ongoing academic conversation. Do not exceed 200 words for your abstract (try to make it shorter if you can – many publications require 100-word abstracts, so it’s good practice!)

**Thesis**

Your thesis should be clear. It should have stakes. It should be part of an ongoing academic conversation. The rest of your essay should not stray from your thesis.

**Introduction**

Your introduction should include the issue, problem, resolution (i.e. framing), and thesis for your argument. It should explain what’s at stake in this argument. It should clearly explain which text(s) you’ll be analyzing. It should provide a clear “map” of the rest of your paper (this is very important!).

**Stakes and Stakeholders**

It’s not enough to simply say, “this argument is important.” Tell us *why* it’s important. Tell us why your thesis has real world implications. Tell us why your thesis is part of an ongoing academic conversation about genre, culture, politics, language, theory, reading, etc.

**Define Key Terms**

Are you using any buzzwords (theoretical ideas, key concepts, lenses, cultural phenomena, important words from other authors) in your essay? Spend time defining them and telling your reader why they are important for your own argument.

**They Say**

Your argument should be part of a conversation. It should be clear that you’ve read our class lens authors this semester and (when applicable) have incorporated their ideas into your arguments. It should be clear that you’ve done outside research and have incorporated scholarly sources into your work.

**Other Authors**

Spend time explaining and analyzing your outside authors. That is, tell your reader how and why an outside author converses with your thesis. Do you agree with this author? Disagree? Why or why not? What assumptions does this author make? Why is this outside voice important for your argument? It’s okay to use footnotes if you find that a secondary critic is taking up too much space in your paper!

**Textual Examples / Evidence**

Do your textual examples irrefutably prove your argument? Are the examples interpretable? Remember, something like, “Offred is the main character of *Handmaid’s Tale*” isn’t really an interpretable claim. “Offred is the main character of *Handmaid’s Tale*, and her erstwhile ambivalence during the Gileadean regime causes the reader to question the novel as a feminist piece” is!

If you can’t explain why you’ve included an example, you shouldn’t include it. All examples and evidence should clearly support your premises and thesis. Cite your evidence. Do not just summarize or generalize – provide specific quotations, data, or textual / cultural examples to illustrate your claims.

**Naysayers**

Recognize your own limitations in this essay. Spell out caveats to your work. Explain why your thesis is still important, regardless of these limitations. Defend your own assumptions (especially bold ones!).

**Scope**

It’s better to strongly prove a more focused argument than to lightly prove a more vague or broad argument. If you have extra writing, it’s okay to put it in a footnote or leave it for an “area of further inquiry” in your conclusion or discussion section.

**Structure**

Use subheadings, clear topic sentences, and meta-commentary to guide your reader through your essay. Remember *for any academic essay* that BLUF is there to aid your reader, who is probably tired and overwhelmed by his / her / their own research! If a subsection is becoming too big or unwieldy, consider breaking it into smaller subsections (use our class handout here for inspiration on subsection content!).

**Style**

Edit for grammatical errors and typos! Use our class style guide for formatting, especially in-text citations (keep Times New Roman 12-point font throughout the document, please)!