

Paper 2: What is “Post-9/11” Literature and/or Culture? -- 15%

- **Due Friday, April 16**
 - **You will turn in your central question for paper 2 as part of response paper 4, due Friday, April 2**
- **1000-1500 words (~4-5 pages double-spaced)**
- **MLA/Chicago style**
- **Turn in via the “Paper 2” portal on Blackboard Assignments page.**

This paper asks you to use one text we have read or watched in class to make an argument about one aspect of “post-9/11” literature and/or culture. The only other stipulation is that the text you write about should not be the text you discussed in paper 1. In general, you will focus in this paper on how this text explores, complicates or questions a given cultural, political, philosophical, or psychological issue you see as important to understanding “post-9/11” literature and/or culture in the United States.

This paper should be self-contained. However, it will lead into your final project, which will entail a revision and expansion of this paper. Your eventual goal in your final project will be to incorporate another text into your argument, either Claudia Rankine’s *Citizen* OR one that you bring in from outside of class.

Formulating your central question

You should begin this paper with a spark of curiosity: something about which a text we have read or watched in class has made you wonder. The most important part of this process is developing your central question. This should be an open-ended question -- for example, a question about how or why something happens, or what something means -- not a “yes” or “no” question. You need this question to be open enough and interesting enough that you want to explore it in a 4-5 page paper (and next, potentially, in a 7-8 page paper). Your thesis statement for this paper will provide an answer to this question. You will include your question as part of response paper 4, which is due Friday, April 2.

Writing your paper

Your paper should be an in-depth analysis of your chosen text. Your argument should seek to provide an answer to the central question you formulate, and you should organize your paper around your answer to this question, as opposed to providing a more general list of claims and observations. This argument should be based on specific evidence from the text you are writing about. This means both that a) your argument should be based on specific passages, pages, scenes, shots, montages, or other textual or visual elements; and b) that any claims you make should be provable using the text -- and only the text -- as evidence. I expect you to present an original thesis and to work closely through the text on your own, NOT to synthesize and then regurgitate interpretations we have worked through in class.