FYS: SAMPLE Research Assignment
Dr. X

Assignment #2: Annotated Bibliography Project

Due: Thursday, November 9th, before Class

Research a topic that interests you within scholarly conversations about a play that you have read. The play can be one that we have covered together in this class, or it can be one that you have read independently or in a previous class. Once you have selected your play, you need to narrow down your research focus further. Effective ways to do this would be to choose a particular character (preferably not the main character/s), a theme, or a literary device that interests you in the selected play. For example, if you select *Romeo and Juliet*, you could choose to research the character of Friar Lawrence, the theme of irrational love, or the use of sonnets within the play.

Once you have a research topic that interests you for your selected play, locate 4 relevant scholarly sources. For each source, generate an MLA citation and annotate the source by writing a 3-5 sentence summary AND a single additional sentence explaining how that source would help you write a research paper on your topic. You will need to read your source carefully to write the summary. If your source has a summary, you may not simply use that, and if you quote or paraphrase specific passages from the text you should include an in-text citation to the page(s) in question.

Finally, you must include a 500+ word reflection that accomplishes two things. *First*, you should explain what you learned about your topic by conducting this research. Instead of repeating the content of your individual source summaries, try to synthesize the material you read. What is the bigger picture? How do the arguments of particular sources relate to one another? *Second* (and in a separate paragraph), describe what you learned about the research process from this assignment: why is research important? What can be difficult about research? How can you ensure that you succeed on research assignments? Etc.

**Requirements**
In order to succeed, each submitted project *must* include:
1) A statement of what the TOPIC is at the very beginning
2) FOUR citations (in MLA style) to scholarly sources
3) An ANNOTATION for each of the four citations, including BOTH a 3-5 sentence summary of the source AND an additional single sentence explaining how that source would help you write a research paper on your topic
4) A REFLECTION (500+ words) that BOTH explains what you learned about your topic AND describe what you learned about the research process
Objectives

- Demonstrate basic information literary skills, including research, evaluation, and citation
- Select a research topic and narrow it appropriately to locate relevant secondary, scholarly sources
- Identify, summarize, and synthesize relevant information from sources
- Generate MLA citations and incorporate quotations according to MLA style

Tips for Success

- Your research topic should be something that interests you. What do you think makes a particular play special, memorable, or thoughtful? What would you want to learn more about? What topic would you want expert opinions on?
- Do not necessarily just use the first sources that you find. Make sure it is relevant to your specific topic.
- Make sure that you are looking at scholarly sources. We will discuss ways to do this!
- Try to be specific rather than vague in both your annotations and reflections.

Grading Criteria

- Research Topic and Focus (Has the writer selected a narrow research topic? Have they found sources that correspond to that topic? Do they persuasively articulate the relevance of their sources to their topic?)
- Citations and Use of Research (Does the annotated bibliography include citations for FOUR scholarly sources? Are the citations in proper MLA style? Are quotations and in-text citations used where appropriate?)
- Annotations (Is each citation followed by both a summary and a statement of how the source is useful? Does the 3-5 sentence summary make clear the argument and scope of the source? Is it specific enough to actually help a reader understand what the source says? When stating why the source is relevant, does the writer avoid speaking in generalities or circular formulations?)
- Content of Reflection (Does the reflection consider what the writer learned both about the particular research topic and about the research process in general? Does the reflection on the topic avoid merely restating the earlier annotations? Does the discussion of the research process avoid generalities and clichés? Is the reflection organized in a clear, logical, persuasive fashion?)
- Style and Mechanics (Is the document clearly and concisely written at the sentence level? Are there frequent grammatical errors, or do errors obscure the meaning of the text in question. Is the text riddled with misspellings and typographical errors? Is the tone and style appropriate to the formal nature of the assignment? [Superior writing will be rewarded.])

For further information about proper formatting and grading considerations, please see the syllabus.