

ENGL 211: Survey of English Literature I  
ESSAY TOPICS

DUE: Outlines (Essay Option B) due OCTOBER 21, 2019

Essays (Essay Options A and B) due NOVEMBER 18, 2019

LENGTH: 6 pages + Title Page + Works Cited (Times New Roman 12 pt. font, double-spaced)

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. All papers must be handed in AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS on the due date.
2. NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED.
3. OFF-TOPIC PAPERS WILL BE ASSIGNED A GRADE OF ZERO.
4. Use MLA format for presentation, citation, and documentation (the *MLA Handbook* is available in the library if you do not own one, and instruction sheets are available from the Learning Skills Centre if you require additional help).
5. For the final paper, include a Works Cited page, NOT a Bibliography (I.e. you may only list books or articles cited in the essay).
6. You must use BOTH scholarly books and articles from scholarly journals in your research. **NOTE: *Wikipedia, Sparknotes and Coles Notes* are NOT considered scholarly sources and do not count toward your Works Cited.**

NOTE ON SOURCES: You MUST cite a MINIMUM of TWO 2 (TWO) journal articles and 2 (TWO) scholarly books **in addition** to the TWO (2) primary sources (the readings listed in the essay topics below).

All of these sources, including the primary texts, must be properly cited using the MLA documentation format and listed in the Works Cited.

You may make use of the headnotes, introductions and "Perspectives" sections of your textbook, but you must not limit your research to these sources. Your textbook includes selected bibliographies for the major authors and for key themes and topics. You will also want to use the MLA (Modern Language Association) Bibliographic Database available from the "online databases" page of the library's website. While many of these sources are available on-line in full-text form, you should remember **to leave yourself lots of time to take advantage of interlibrary loan** for sources available only in hardcopy that have to be requested from other libraries. If you have questions about using on-line bibliographic databases, see the reference desk in the library or make an appointment with our librarian, Annelise Dowd:

<https://unbc.libcal.com/appointments/annelisedowd>

Essay topics begin next page.

## Essay Topics

### TOPIC #1:

With reference to TWO (2) of the following texts, discuss the significance of **nature/the natural world**: *Beowulf* (selections indicated on the Readings and Assignment Schedule); Milton, *Paradise Lost, Book I*; Queen Elizabeth I, “The Doubt of Future Foes”; Pope, “An Essay on Criticism, Part I.

Do not simply describe references to nature but emphasize the ways that it is *expressed* in the formal aspects and diction of the text. Consider such issues as the following: how the “natural” is defined; the natural and the “unnatural”; the relationship between the “natural” and the human-made; concepts of human nature in relation to the natural world; the natural world and relevant cosmologies (E.g. *Concordia discors*, the Great Chain of Being); the “natural world” and concepts of morality; the “natural world” and models of governance; the concept of Natural Law or the difference between Nature and nature. Remember, this is a research essay so you will want to seek out sources that will help you to understand how this concept was understood and articulated in the period in question.

### TOPIC #2:

With reference to TWO (2) of the following texts, discuss the significance of **freedom and containment**: Chaucer, “The Miller’s Prologue and Tale”; Milton, “When I Consider”; *Book of Homilies*, “Against Disobedience”; Donne, “Batter My Heart.”

Do not simply describe references to freedom and containment but emphasize the ways that they are *expressed* in the formal aspects and diction of the text. Consider one or more of the following issues and questions: “slavery” to love, passion, appetite, a cause, a person; law v. license; poetic containment; Providence, fate, and “free will”; social obligation; definitions, rules of conduct, stereotypes; tradition and novelty; revolution/rebellion. How are freedom and containment defined? Are they always at odds? Complementary? Co-dependent? Is freedom always a positive value, containment negative? What underlying values or concern influence the ways that freedom and containment are represented? Remember, this is a research essay so you will want to seek out sources that will help you to understand how this concept was understood and articulated in the period in question.

### TOPIC #3:

With reference to TWO (2) of the following texts, discuss the significance of **rank (class, Estate) and social place**: Swift, “A Modest Proposal”; Milton, *Paradise Lost, Book I*; Philips, “Upon the Double Murder”; Milton, “The Tenure of Kings.”

Do not simply describe references to rank and social place but emphasize the ways that they are *expressed* in the formal aspects and diction of the text. Consider one or more of the following issues: governance and subjection; the debate over meritocracy and inheritance; the relationship between social place and Natural Law; how “value” is defined and determined; class conflict; social mobility. Remember, this is a research essay so you will want to seek out sources that will help you to understand how this concept was understood and articulated in the period in question.