English 117B Spring 2016 **Paper #1 Analysis with Research**

**Overview:** “Analysis” means this that you will go beyond merely gathering information on a particular topic. You *will* be gathering information, but the main goal is to do some original thinking about culture, guided by the learning goals of this class, as described here.

1. Students shall be able to compare systematically the ideas, values, images, cultural artifacts, economic structures, technological developments, or attitudes of people from more than one culture outside the U.S. through the media of film and literature.
2. Students shall be able to identify the historical context of ideas and cultural traditions outside the U.S. and how they have influenced American culture.
3. Students shall be able to explain how a culture outside the U.S. has changed in response to internal and external pressures.

This analysis should be linked with something we are discussing as a class, a topic touched on in a film or reading on the syllabus, but I encourage you to be creative in choosing a topic.

**Procedure**:Choose a topic that interests you (see below for examples) that qualifies as a cultural comparison of some kind and that will lead you to make an original and arguable analysis. Organize your analysis into a coherent (and new) whole, citing your sources properly, and then share it with the rest of us. You will write about it and present your findings briefly in class, as well (just a few minutes each student).

**Details:**

* **Sources**: Use credible, scholarly, college-level sources, not random websites. Use at least 5 but no more than 10. Include at least one in-depth source, such as a book, and at least one peer-reviewed journal.
* **Length, format:** 2000 words with a works cited page. Use MLA style.
* **Topic proposal:** type up your topic (briefly) and your research question(s)
* **Due dates:** topic proposal 2/12 working bibliography 2/26 Essay 3/25
* **Remember Turnitin.com:** This is required for credit. Late submissions will be penalized.

**Moving from a Topic to Questions**:

Example One: Comparing Cultures’ Ideas compare two (or more) culture’s attitudes, values, or ideas about some common topic, such as education, technology, gender roles, religion, or equality. You should connect this in some way to a film or story on our syllabus, but go beyond what we say about it in class.

For instance, you could compare the attitudes about women’s education (and restrictions that have been placed on it) in the Indian community we see in Swades with similar (or contrasting) views held by some other community. This is a theme that will recur in *Ridicule*, *Testament of Youth,* and *Desert Flower*. Modern efforts to get more girls educated (or prevent this) could be a focus of your study. Your analysis should dig into explaining why some people believe girls and women should (or shouldn’t) have equal access to education.

Example Two: Other cultures’ impact on the US: What we think of as “mainstream American culture” is always changing, largely from the influence of people from other parts of the world. You could analyze the effect of one group over time (e.g. the Vietnamese “boat people,” or the NRIs), or consider the effect of different cultures on one idea, such as race. For instance, we now include the Irish and Italians among those considered “white,” but this wasn’t always the case.

Example Three: Cultural change over time Inquiries of this type will investigate how *and why* a culture outside the U.S. has changed in response to internal and external pressures. The analysis is in the “why”? For example, you could examine India’s efforts to eradicate the worst evils of the caste system, maybe beginning with Gandhi’s movement.

**Questions?** Please ask them! If we don’t cover it in class, feel free to email me or stop by my office in the Faculty Office Building 128 (W 1:15-2:15, Th 2-3, and by appointment M-F).

**Topics**:

1. The “NRI” and members of other diasporas: how have the ones who leave their homelands influenced the ones they meet (and the ones who stay behind).
2. The value of the “handicapped,” how and why groups like the deaf have been shunned or included by their societies.
3. Slavery then and now: how and why have societies depended on or tried to eradicate slavery and indentured servitude.
4. How have attitudes about racial difference and racial “mixing” changed over time?
5. Analyze the psychological motives or developmental changes that attract a person to a life of public service.
6. How has the institution of “mail-order” brides and other formal pairings of foreign spouses operated in different cultures and time periods?
7. How has the institution of arranged marriages operated in different cultures and time periods? What is the relationship between this custom and “love matches” over the ages?
8. How have different societies, or the same society over time, valued technology and the people who develop it? (best to focus on a particular technology, such as the car, film, photography, tractors, electric light, etc.)
9. Examine how attitudes toward war have changed (or persisted) over time, or compare these attitudes as they are expressed in different cultures.
10. Analyze the changing attitudes toward a particular economic structure (such as sharecropping) or economic idea, such as aristocracy or socialism.
11. Analyze the relationship between religious ideas and particular societal attitudes, such as gender roles, social hierarchies, or cultural practices (such as FGM).
12. Analyze how historical figures become icons, and how “nonfictional” sources such as memoirs, letters, journals, and photographs are transformed and interpreted to make art. Best to chose just one historical figure or at most two.