**Turning a Textual Analysis into a Conference Paper (8-10 pages)**

1. Why we use research:
   1. Find out what else has been said on the topic, and if your thesis has already been explored.
   2. Mark out differences between your position and those argued by others.
   3. Find out about historical developments (political, social, religious, other) that might impact your topic (for example, boy apprentices playing girls might affect your argument about the portrayal of women in As You Like it, so understanding how apprenticeship worked might be worthwhile)
   4. Find out what theoretical approaches can be used to explore the topic (recent approaches are gender criticism, cognitive criticism, body criticism, disability criticism, humors criticism)
   5. Find out what words or ideas meant in a Shakespearean context (for example, look up the word “effeminate” in the OED or look up melancholy in Shakespeare’s time)
   6. Look up cultural associations with your topic from Shakespeare’s time (for example, if you are using animal imagery, you might explore how animals were treated by reading about the trials of animals or understanding about dogs and bear-baiting)
2. What points should you support with outside research?
   1. Use research to show where you fit in the larger conversation about your topic.
      1. If you find other articles or books on your topic, you could talk about how your thesis is different from theirs
      2. You could say that they covered your topic but missed something important that you will explore;
      3. You could say you disagree with other approaches, and your paper will explain why;
      4. You could point out that they looked at one character, while you will look at another
   2. Use research to change how we see something (for example, dogs were often put on trial and always lost. So you could say that Richard seems vicious and monstrous, like dogs attacking bears, but like dogs he had everything stacked against him with no advocate on his side)
   3. Use historical research to give important background to your topic (for example, Richard III might have symbolized Robert Cecil because of his appearance; in that case, you would need to know more about Cecil and Shakespeare’s attitude towards him)
   4. Use primary research to show what Shakespeare’s contemporaries thought about a topic (for example, you could use a play by Ben Jonson to show that devils and ghosts came up through a trap door, or you could use a description of a play to show how noisy the Globe might have been during a performance, or you could use an Herbal (a book about the medicinal properties of plants) to show ideas about poison, or you could use a book about anatomy like Crooke’s Mikrocosmographia to show how people thought men were different from women)
3. What sources shouldn’t you use?
   1. Web sites that are not created by credible authorities
   2. Encyclopedias or Wikipedia (instead, use the sources they cite)
   3. Dictionaries (except the OED to understand historical usage). For example, don’t say, “Webster’s Dictionary defines imagery as ……”
   4. Really old sources (with some exceptions)
   5. Any modern-language translation of the text (I mean it; I will fail your paper)
4. What points should you not support?
   1. Any source to support common-sense information or events from the play’s plot
   2. Sources to make points for you (remember, this is your argument, so when ou quote a source, it should be for one of the purposes listed in number 1)
   3. The definition of a word in the Shakespearean text, unless you want to take issue with how it’s commonly defined in footnotes (It’s commonly assumed you will have to find out what some words mean, but no one expects you to show how you learned that)
   4. Your conclusion
5. Any other rules?
   1. Do not use too many long quotes from other sources or Shakespeare; use them only when you will analyze all of them.
   2. Use MLA, Chicago, APA, or another common format and citation system. (Don’t just copy a web URL into your Works Cited page; don’t center quotes or indent them on the right (use my handout), don’t use a title page, etc.
   3. Don’t summarize the play.
   4. Look for sources early, as some are available only from other libraries
6. Where and how do I find research?
   1. Primary Sources: Use my links page for many sources, such as English Broadside Ballad Archive, Early English Books Online, and sources under “General Electronic Text archives” and “Specialized Electronic Text archives”
   2. Primary sources: look at the bibliographies of books and articles you use. They are always full of primary sources. For example, Shapiro’s 1599 uses almanacs, letters and contemporary records, church rolls, wills, inventories, diaries, ships- manifests, broadsides, and more.
   3. Secondary Texts: Use World Shakespeare bibliography
   4. Use Me, because I have a whole lot of stuff on the plays I teach (and even some I don’t) and
   5. Use the references librarians

**Sample Abstract (single author) from NCUR**

**Abstract Title**:  
The Isocratean Concept of Natural Law: Eloquence and Civilization in the Greco-Roman Rhetorical Tradition

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**Abstract**:  
Sometime before 380 BCE the Attic orator Isocrates adopted a powerful argument for the centrality of rhetoric to civil society, that the ability to persuade is both the essential human characteristic and the necessary condition for civilization. The implications of the theory are profound. If the effective use of language is the essential human attribute, a rhetorical education directly augments one’s human potential while, at the political level, any society that wishes to enjoy the blessings of civilization must foster rhetorical education and culture. This essay demonstrates how Isocrates’ theory was deployed over his career (specifically in *Panegyricus* 48ff; *Nicocles* 5-9; and *Antidosis* 250ff, 273ff) and advances the argument that Isocrates developed and augmented his ideas in a refutative posture, as he attempted to answer positions on rhetoric taken by Plato in the *Gorgias*.

Mary Adams

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“Who’s there?”: Navigating Acoustic Territory in *Hamlet*

This paper will examine the play’s moments of vocal games and failed speech to understand not only Hamlet’s struggles to sufficient mourn his father but also other characters’ inability to extricate themselves from social and spiritual predicaments engendered by either the murder or Hamlet’s response to it. Characters often participate in “Hoodman Blind”: game-like searches in the dark around a palace that echoes with both slander—inhabiting the upper sphere—and subterranean voices dwelling below. Above and below, this acoustic territory is defined by these voices and other noises which, intermittent at first, crescendo and proliferate in the play. The cacophony of voices comes not only from literal play sounds but also from metaphorical voices as well as human voices and activities within and beyond the theater. I’d like to imagine that these voices belong to the forgotten “rabble” that Hamlet and Claudius go out of their way to forget. Meanwhile, the principal characters’ preoccupation with Hoodman Blind signifies to us on multiple levels: As a means of discovery, speech and motive are less and less intelligible or sufficient. As the expression of the ability to mourn, speech is separate from the body and echoes as a distant copy of itself. Simultaneously, as Denmark’s political stewards, the principals themselves are losing their bearings amid a cacophony of disembodied voices. And throughout the play, speech fails in the mouths of those who utter it until finally surrogates must speak for them, dividing speech most finally from the body.