**EN 120 Satire**

**Paper 1 Assignment**

**Purpose**: For this assignment, you will exercise the critical reading and contextualizing skills we have been practicing in class on one of the assigned texts for the course. You will practice your ability to close-read a text and to put it into conversation with its historical context, a critical context, or in literary context with another text we’ve read so far.

**Task:** In a paper between **1,200 and 1,400** words in length, you will make a claim about one or more of the primary/exhibit texts we’ve read thus far*.* You may (but are not required to) utilize the secondary material on the syllabus. You may (but are not required to) do additional research. You will write on *Gulliver’s Travels* or *A Modest Proposal*, given that we will have read only these texts in full before Paper 1 drafts are due.

**Potential questions/topics:** You may answer any one of these questions, some combination of these questions, or make your own claim entirely. Choose whatever excites, interests, or frustrates you most. Think about moments that seem surprising or out of place in the text—moments that need to be picked apart and examined.

1. Think about a particular narrative element of one of our texts that seems surprising (e.g. detailed descriptions of Gulliver’s bodily functions, Swift’s lists, Gulliver’s publisher letters, etc.) and consider why the author made this decision. Make a claim about the text as a whole related to this unusual narrative choice.
2. Based on his presentation of issues in *AMP* or *Gulliver’s Travels* (or both), make a claim about how Swift views a particular historical issue (e.g. colonialism/imperialism, the Church of England, maintaining a standing army). You might compare how Swift expresses these views differently in *AMP* and *GT*.
3. Pick ONE part (e.g. Part I, Part II, Part III, or Part IV) of Gulliver’s Travels and make a claim about how Gulliver’s worldview changes throughout that part in particular. Why would Swift present Gulliver’s change (or lack of change) in this way? What role does Gulliver’s worldview in your chosen part play within the text as a whole?
4. What role does fantasy play in the text? Why, for example, would Swift write about fantastical lands in order to satirize his own government? Make a claim about the impact of fantasy on your reading of the text.
5. What role does time play in the text? You might think about narrative time (how long it takes Swift’s narrator in *AMP* to reveal his actual idea, for example) or time as a concept in the text itself (when the Lilliputians note that Gulliver’s watch is “the god that he worships” [p. 41]). Make a claim about Swift’s use of narrative or conceptual time.
6. How does Swift portray “othered” identity categories, like race, class, or gender? Do his texts present a continuous attitude toward women? Toward non-white characters (are there any?)? Toward upper vs. lower classes? Make a claim about Swift’s attention to one of these categories.

**Comments:** Whatever topic you choose, you **must** support your argument with quotations from your texts. Additionally, these quotes should be chosen because they support your argument *and* you must spend the necessary time analyzing your quotations: show your reader *why* they matter. Whatever texts you choose to work with must be cited in proper MLA format. Please **do not hesitate** to email me with questions, run a claim by me, or come to office hours/make an appointment. You will want to look at the **Paper Writing Guidelines sheet on Blackboard.**

**Requirements:**

-an MLA formatted Works Cited page (even if you only use the primary text)

-page numbers

-staple your paper

-include a word count at the end of your essay for all drafts

**Due Dates:**

Email preliminary claim **Wed., Sept. 26** by 11:59pm

to klacey@bu.edu

Paper 1 Draft **Mon., Oct. 1** (hard copy in class & uploaded to BB)

Peer Review Workshop **Mon., Oct. 1**

Mandatory Paper Conferences **Mon., Oct. 1-Wed., Oct. 3**

Final Draft **Fri., Oct. 12** (hard copy in class & upload to BB)

**Secondary Source Resources:**

-“Introduction” in your copy of *Gulliver’s Travels*

-“Further Reading” section in *GT*

-Use the Mugar Library website to search keywords related to your topic (Look for PEER-REVIEWED as an icon on the articles)

- Wikipedia is a good jumping-off point: you can look at the sources at the bottom and go to the primary sources yourself to evaluate their usefulness.