**Paper 1 Assignment**

**Purpose:**

In this 1,000 to 1,200-word paper (about 4-5 pages), you will practice two key writing skills: **summarizing a text and close reading**. We will work on developing these skills together in class. Paper 1 is your opportunity to practice them in your own argument about Alice Walker’s novel *The Color Purple.*

**Task:**

As Professor Mike Sell has said, literary study is not about unpacking hidden meanings within a text. Rather, it is about improving the **quality of attention** that we give to a text. There aren’t correct or incorrect textual interpretations; there are only supported and unsupported interpretations. As you read *The Color Purple,* pay attention to moments that seem odd or unexpected; think about patterns that you notice throughout the text. How does that pattern affect your understanding of the text? Write a clear, arguable claim about that pattern and its impact on the text, then use evidence (quotes from the text) and analysis (explaining how those quotes support your claim) to give your reader the tools to understand (and potentially be persuaded by) your interpretation.

**Due Dates**

* **Wed., Sept. 16:** Draft 1 due by class time. Bring a copy that you can easily send to classmate(s) for peer review (Google Doc or Word doc recommended)
* **Wed., Sept. 16-Fri., Sept. 18:** Required Draft 1 Conferences with Kristin
* **Fri., Sept. 25:** Final Draft due by class time via Slack Direct Message to Kristin

**Requirements (to maintain Grading Contract):**

-Write 1,000 to 1,200 words.

-Cite quotations from the novel as evidence for your argument *and* analyze those quotes. (We will discuss in class how to do so).

-Demonstrate your ability to make original, thoughtful observations about a passage (or passages) and to “zoom out” to think about the impact of the author’s choices on our understanding of the text as a whole.

-Use in-text citations (MLA format) when citing your source.

-Include a Works Cited page (MLA format).

-Include a word count at the end of your essay.

**Advice:**

-Practice the skills required in this paper (making a claim, succinctly summarizing a text, and close reading) in class, but also as you do your assigned reading leading up to the paper due dates.

-Consider looking at [examples](https://www.bu.edu/writingprogram/journal/past-issues/issue-8/collins-d/) from the Writing Program’s [journal of student work, *WR,*](https://www.bu.edu/writingprogram/journal/past-issues/)for examples of strong claims and use of evidence.

-Ask for help and be open to constructive feedback in peer review and paper conferences.

-Plan to use only *The Color Purple* and your own interpretations for this paper. If you have questions or would like to use a secondary source, please talk with Kristin.