Paper 1 Assignment

WR 150: Women and Madness in Literature

**Purpose**

To enter an already existing conversation about a text; to use a source to motivate an argument; to structure a coherent argument and provide appropriate textual evidence with analysis; to continue developing research skills.

**Assignment**

In an essay of around 1000 words, write an argument about *Trifles* that is motivated by the argument source excerpt at the bottom of this page. Your primary focus in this essay is the play (exhibit source), so you will need to include carefully selected passages with accompanying analysis. Judith Stephens will motivate your argument to give it a direction and shape. You must use one to two additional peer-reviewed sources (argument or theory) to enhance your argument. Use the Mugar Library site for your search.

**Logistics**

Paper claim and introductory paragraph Due Thurs., Jan. 25

First Draft, Peer Review Workshop Due Tues., Jan. 30

Mandatory Conference Tues., Jan. 30-Thurs., Feb. 1

Final Draft Due Thurs., Feb. 8

**Requirements**

* Include a correctly formatted Works Cited page (see OWL at Purdue website)
* Title your essay (see Turabian 13.3, p. 127).
* Add a word count to the end of your essay.

“I am suggesting that, in addition to these views, the play also colludes with dominant gender ideology, and, in this respect, refutes its own argument. Compensation is at work here because the women's moral superiority enables them to go against or to subvert conventional law and still be ‘right.’ However, recuperation is served in that ‘women's law’ is pitted against ‘men's law,’ and thus the play perpetuates the idea of separate spheres. By finding and concealing the incriminating evidence, the women win their own individual victory, but the system continues intact….The play perpetuates the romantic notion that each woman can secretly and individually subvert the larger system, if she so desires.”

**Stephens, Judith L. “Gender Ideology and Dramatic Convention in Progressive Era**

**Plays, 1890-1920.” *Theatre Journal*, vol. 41, no. 1, 1989, pp. 45–55.**