Final Paper

Your final paper will be a 5-7 page essay, double spaced, using one or two (at the most) texts we read for class. Much like in the first essay you will continue to use the fundamental tools of intellectual analysis: attention to language and pattern recognition - that is to say, you will begin with close reading and, only after aggregating observations from the text, make a claim based on your readings.

But you will also build on these skills by consolidating these claims into a cohesive and coherent argument, using multiple passages from one or more authors. Although the scope of this paper is larger than that of the close reading essay, you should still keep your focus narrow. For example, an argument simply about “individualism” in Emerson is too vague and broad for a satisfying paper. But if you start with the text itself, paying careful attention to the language, a much narrower argument will emerge (for example, if “individualism” is too broad, something like “the ways in which Emerson uses the first person pronoun to create *a certain concept* of individualism” could be interesting. Of course, it’s up to you to say what kind of concept that is, how your evidence backs up your argument, etc.)

This assignment will allow you the opportunity to practice very common forms of academic writing: advancing a point of view or argument, or exploring an idea, based on the work of other thinkers. There is no need to consult critics or theorists – talk with me if you would like to do so, or feel you can’t make your argument without outside sources. In general, the texts themselves should provide ample territory!

Please cite consistently. Choose your favorite: APA, MLA, or Chicago.