

THEME STATEMENT  
ENGLISH 125.068

DUE: the class period before your conference with me.

FORMAT: 2-3 pages, 12pt Times New Roman, double spaced, one inch margins.

YOUR ASSIGNMENT:

I would like you to construct a two to three page essay detailing your choice of theme for this course. That is, I want you to both choose a theme and provide a brief sketch for how you will implement your choice over the course of the semester. Being asked to commit to such an extensive project so quickly can be intimidating, but you needn't think of this essay as a contract – you can and will revise your thoughts and tactics extensively throughout the semester. Rather, this essay gives you the opportunity to think about your topic in very concrete terms, which will aid you in making a selection that works for you within the context of this course.

In this assignment, I expect you to address three main points:

1. **What is your theme?** Give a brief summary of your theme. If you've selected a specialized area of knowledge (computer programming, for example), be sure to use language that someone who does not share your expertise can understand.
2. **Why have you selected this topic?** Here I would like you to answer the following question: "Why is this important?" Avoid generalization, and focus on how the importance of your topic extends beyond yourself and to your audience. By way of example, the sentence "Computer programming is important because I've been interested in it since I was 10" tells us very little. "Since computers are insinuating themselves deeper into our culture, a basic understanding of computing among the general population is essential to any society that is invested in modern technology" is much better.
3. **How will you address your topic in the four major essays you will have to write for this course?** Please provide a brief sketch for each of the following types of essay: personal narrative, description, comparison, and persuasion. These sketches should detail an idea for a possible take on your theme, and need not be more than a sentence or two each. The following would be perfectly sufficient as one of the four sketches:

"In my comparison essay, I plan to discuss that computer programming can best be understood both as a scholarly pursuit (in the University, for example), and as a hobby (Napster, for instance, was developed some students in their dorm room, outside of class)."

Please refer to the FOUR GENRES handout for details on each of the types.

You may find it helpful to run ideas by each other and by me while you are writing your essay. Please don't be shy about sending your questions via email, or coming to see me in my office.