*Studies in American Literature*: **Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter***: Final Essay Assignment- Fall 2017 Semester

**Type:** Literary analysis paper

**Length:** Two-three pages minimum

**Format:** Typed in 12 pt. Times New Roman font and Double-spaced.

**When:**  You will have time in the 3rd floor Computer Lab to complete this assignment on Thursday, September 21 and Friday, September 22. If you do not finish and submit your essay by the end of class on Friday, you must finish the essay for homework and submit it by the end of the weekend.

**Due:** By midnight on Sunday, September 24 in *Turnitin*

*(A student will lose 10 points off the final paper grade for each day a paper is turned in late!)*

**Worth:**  A Test Grade

Your essay **must include a significant amount of parenthetical citations for all references to information found in the novel** (material that is directly quoted and material that is paraphrased). The correct MLA format for citing material from a novel is to include the author’s last name and the page number in parenthesis the first time you mention a source: (Hawthorne 27). Every subsequent time that you include information from the same source you can just give the page number: (45).

**Any essay that does not include specific references to the text WILL NOT receive a passing grade! If you have no parenthetical citations, only one, or even just a few- then you are not using the text to support your arguments and/or you may be plagiarizing!**

You do not need to include a Works Cited Page for this essay if the novel is your only source. If you choose to include additional sources, you must include a properly formatted Works Cited Page with your paper (MLA). It should not be necessary to use sources other than the novel, but some students do find it helpful to look at other sources.

The five topic choices for this essay assignment are printed on the back side of this paper. Once you have determined which essay topic you would like to write about, please see me for a copy of a list of pages that you may look to for passages in the text that can be used as evidence and support within the body of your essay. This list is meant only to serve as a guideline and to help you find places in the text that may be useful to you when writing your essay.

Choose ONE of the following topics for your final paper on *The Scarlet Letter*:

1. Write an essay in which you discuss the function of the actual scarlet letter in this allegory. What are the many meanings of the scarlet letter and how, when, and why do those meanings change throughout the novel? Why does Hester repeatedly refuse to stop wearing the letter? How is this symbol an essential piece of this allegory?
2. Write an essay in which you discuss the moral of this allegory. How does Hawthorne develop this moral principle or universal truth through the events and characters of the novel (in particular, Hester, Dimmesdale, and Chillingworth)?
3. Write an essay in which you discuss how this novel is about the impact of seeking vengeance. Why do humans desire to get revenge on those who they feel have wronged them? What can happen to those who become fixated on getting revenge? How did Chillingworth’s yearning for revenge have an impact on him and on his victim(s)?
4. Write an essay in which you discuss the role of the scaffold in this allegory. What does the scaffold represent to the members of the Puritan community and to the characters in the novel? How are the three scaffold scenes essential to the story?
5. Some readers of *The Scarlet Letter* feel that Hester Prynne was successfully repressed, or restricted, by her Puritan society. Others feel that, in spite of her public disgrace and punishment, she was able to express herself in meaningful ways. Choose one side of the argument and write an essay that supports your position.

