

English 611: Fitzgerald and Hemingway
Final Papers: Spring 2019
Professor Bryant Mangum

A. Description

12-15-page paper: this paper will deal with some original problem (biographical, bibliographical, or critical) including a complete check of existing treatments of the problem by other scholars. This is a documented, thesis-support paper.

B. Finding a Topic

You are to select a topic of interest to you that you would like to explore in depth. In some cases this topic may originate in the research you have done for your seminar report or in others it will come from a question that strikes you as warranting further investigation. For example: when we read "The Diamond as Big as the Ritz" I will introduce an idea from a critic on Fitzgerald's use of fantasy (not just in "Diamond" but in other stories as well). If this particular subject appealed to you, you would begin by locating the works by Fitzgerald that use fantasy. Then you would go back to the essay we referred to in class as a beginning point to consider how you would build on and extend the treatment of this subject in your essay. One example of a project that might originate in a seminar report: If one had done research on flappers or on one or more of Fitzgerald's heroines, it would make sense to extend this in a longer paper to a study of Fitzgerald's female characters. You would of course have to limit this topic, but you could, for example, examine the development of the heroines in, say, three novels. In this case you would likely begin with a book called *Fitzgerald's New Women: Harbingers of Change*. Your task would be to come up with an original thesis that came at the subject from a new angle. Another example: If you found "Winter Dreams" and "Absolution" interesting you might explore the topic of the cluster stories that surround *Gatsby*, coming up with a thesis about how Fitzgerald used his stories as a workshop for the novel. I encourage you to find something interesting to you and then to begin thinking of ways you could examine it closes in a 12-15-page paper. With Hemingway the process would be the same. If you are interested in the real-life counterparts to Catherine Barkley in *Farewell to Arms* or Brett Ashley in *The Sun Also Rises*, this might lead you to a study of Hemingway's treatment of women in his fiction—and a book called *Hemingway's Women*. If you find Hemingway's ideas about gender interesting (or perplexing), you might decide to read his posthumous *Garden of Eden* and enter the scholarly discourse that suggests that this novel brings up ideas that suggest his ideas about gender construction are quite different from those usually associated with him. I think you will find many subjects related to both authors that you will think warrant further exploration. Find one that interests and excites you.

C. Research

Once you have decided on your broad general topic you will need to go out and discover other treatments of the topic. This will mean starting with the MLAIB or using a bibliography and searching through it for titles that seem to be close to your topic. You can also go through the annual bibliographies in the volumes of American Literary Scholarship, which have sections each year devoted to Fitzgerald and Hemingway. I will be glad to point you in the direction of articles and books and bibliographies once you have narrowed your topic. For a paper of this length I think you should consult at least ten sources and integrate many (or most) of them in

your paper. The paper should have a bibliography and should be documented using the MLA style as found in of the *MLA Handbook*, 8th edition.

D. Sample Topics

The development of Fitzgerald's heroines in selected novels or stories

Hemingway's treatment of women in his fiction (selected stories or novels)

Fitzgerald's use of fantasy

The evolution of the Hemingway code (selecting landmark works)

A study of the Fitzgerald stories which cluster around either *Gatsby* or *Tender Is the Night*

A comparative study of some topic shared by Fitzgerald and Hemingway (the "romantic" ideal, for example; or gender roles)

E. Tips

In coming up with a suitable topic for this length paper, think of it in parts. Suppose you chose to do a study of the stories that cluster around *The Great Gatsby*. In this case there are approximately five stories that relate directly to the novel. Imagine then in this case that you would have an introduction of approximately two pages, perhaps; and in this introduction you would acquaint your reader with the broad topic, with the research done on it up to this point, and with your narrow thesis. This would mean that you would have approximately 2 pages to devote to a study of each story and its relationship to the novel. This would leave you two or three pages for a formal conclusion. This is, of course, just one way of doing this, but the main idea is to break your topic up into manageable sections so that you will not be overwhelmed by length. Doing this will also allow you to see if the topic is a reasonable one for a 12-15-page paper.