**PAPER ONE: Understanding Literature through Experience**

**Purpose**

Great literature is great in part because we can relate it to our lives, no matter how disparate the experience. This assignment asks you to connect something in the work of Keats to a specific experience in your life and discuss how Keats' work helps illuminate that experience or see the experience from a new perspective.

The purpose of the response paper is twofold: 1) to allow you to reflect in writing on what you’ve read; 2) to encourage you to make personal connections with a single poem.

**Assignment**

The response paper is an exploratory and focused look at a particular reading assignment through the lens of experience. It’s a good idea to keep your essay limited to a single poem, though it's possible if not likely that you will use something in the letters to help back up your idea. Your essay should accurately represent the material you’ve read and also represent your interpretation of the work. More than that, the response paper should include the way in which you see the work relevant to your own experience. Experience can be defined broadly here: personal experience, cultural experience (including popular culture), or academic/intellectual experience. For example, you might apply something you learned in a women's studies course to the text or you might compare the text to a contemporary film or television series or compare it to your own personal experiences. How is this piece of writing relevant to your own life or your own intellectual or cultural experiences?

When considering how to focus your essay, consider starting with what excited you about the unit and then think about why it excited you. Choose a single poem from the readings that embodies that experience. Where does it connect to you? How does what you already know about the world help illuminate the reading, and how does the text help you further understand your world? While it’s fine to diverge from the poem to include relevant personal narrative, the personal narrative should not dominate your essay. Keep your experience focused also. Try to avoid, however, listing off all the ways a single poem relates to you. Try to focus on a single experience or relate it to what you've read.

Your response paper should not critique the poem. Do not describe how awful you thought the poem was or how wonderful it was. Choose a poem that interests you and describe why. If you found something boring, don’t write about it. Choose something that wasn’t boring.

**Format**

Your paper should be 600-1000 words (two to three pages), double spaced, in MLA format. It is fine if you want to write more. The minimum is just that; please meet it and better to exceed it. You will be assessed on the accuracy of your portrayal of the work, your ability to analyze the work through experience, your ability to support your ideas with textual evidence (that means including quoted material from the poem and/or letters), and your ability to keep your essay focused.