

## PROSPECTIVE TOPICS FOR RESEARCH PAPERS ON LOVECRAFT

For the month of November, we will be working on an extended research/interpretive/analytic essay on Lovecraft. Our goal will be an essay of roughly eight pages with a minimum of eight sources, including the relevant stories being considered.

Students are free to choose any of an infinite number of topics for their research essays. Below you will find some suggestions. We will have conferences to discuss your topic selections and develop some strategies for dealing with them.

1. Choose one of Lovecraft's stories and go into it in great detail by exploring its themes and overall meaning. Sources for this project would be secondary material on Lovecraft, including critical essays.
2. Look at a film adaptation of one of Lovecraft's stories and compare and contrast it to the story itself. Assess and analyze the film in relation to the story.
3. Trace a theme or issue that carries through a number of Lovecraft's stories. For example, one could discuss the issue of theft of identity, as it emerges in "Thing at the Doorstep," "Shadow Out of Time," "Dreams in the Witch-House" etc. Or look at the theme of miscegenation as it appears in a number of stories.
4. Analyze Lovecraft's use of a plot device in series of stories, for example, his use of the Necronomicon, and what its purpose and function is within the stories.
5. Examine parts of Lovecraft's biography and its influence or impact on one or more of his stories.
6. Observe and analyze Lovecraft's influence on popular culture and what this influence might mean, for example, his influence on gaming culture and how this culture appropriates his works and ideas, or the manifestation of his work in other cultural products.
7. Examine how Lovecraft's more fantasy/science fiction oriented works anticipate developments in these fields or how his influence appears in some works in these fields.
8. Compare and contrast one or more of Lovecraft's stories with another or other stories in the genres of supernatural horror/science fiction/fantasy.
9. Examine one or more of Lovecraft's literary influences (Edgar Allan Poe, Lord Dunsany, Arthur Machen) and how this influence impacted one or more of Lovecraft's stories. For example, the influence of Arthur Machen's "Great God Pan" on Lovecraft's "Dunwich Horror."

Feel free to consult with me frequently throughout your process of writing the research essay and contact me if you run into problems, and we will try to work our way out of them.