"Comparison/Contrast" Essay Assignment Guidelines

More so than the first two essay assignments for this class, the comparison/contrast essay assignment provides the student with some specific guidelines to be met, but also allows the student to explore his/her interests.

In this essay you will elect one of the following options and develop an essay which addresses the topic from your perspective. This essay is a character analysis, in which you will compare and contrast two characters from Shakespeare’s Hamlet.

1. Choose two characters from the play for your comparison/contrast (Gertrude/Ophelia; Hamlet/Laertes; Claudius/Hamlet; Horatio/Hamlet; Gertrude/Claudius; etc.);
2. Select one, two, or three literary conventions related to characterization and/or character development to apply to both characters for the purpose of comparison/contrast; you may also elect to examine specifics aspects of plot, character background, character actions, character motivations, setting, and/or theme.
3. In addition, you may elect to adopt a critical perspective (feminist, historical, psychoanalytical, etc.) if you choose, but this is not required;
4. Develop your thesis statement: your topic, plus the points you will make in your essay;
5. Complete your research and your planning pages (review the instructions and follow the examples);
6. Draft your essay; edit your essay, and submit your essay.

Tips:
• Your C/C Thesis statement should:
  1) Name the items to be compared/contrasted
  2) Indicate the purpose of the comparison /contrast
  3) Name the grounds for comparison/contrast

• The essay pattern in plain English: Introduce; compare; contrast; and conclude (be sure to include support and citation).

• Make sure you avoid engaging in an “extended summary” of the work (telling what happened in the play);
• Use literary conventions to discuss “what the writer (Shakespeare) is accomplishing through the characters, and in the work;
• Use your sources to demonstrate your knowledge of how other writers have examined the work, as well as points they have raised;
• Use the text to illustrate points, rather than to summarize the play;
• Make your points clear, and avoid speculations which your sources do not support.

This is a 750 word essay assignment, which should contain no less than three sources of secondary support, all of which must be acquired through the use of the online databases provided by the HCC library, OR from materials physically housed in one of the HCC campus libraries, the public library, or another college or university library. Only one of your sources may come from the Internet, unless you use more than three, and in that case no more than two sources may come from the Internet.