Value: 10%
Goals: To gain an understanding of what constitutes research in a particular discipline; to improve ethos and presentation style; to demonstrate competence with research methods and basic writing skills like organization, style, and grammar.
Length: 2 pages (not including “problems” paragraph or annotated bibliography).
Conference: We will be going over your paper proposal. Please bring in printouts of all of your sources, your handbook, and an outline for your Final Research Project. Failure to bring in these materials will constitute failure to prepare for the conference, and you will be penalized as though you are a no-show.
Due Date: Per the syllabus as a Word or RTF attachment before class.

Assignment Specifics:
In 2 and no more than 2 ½ pages, you will explain the argument you will present in your final paper. The proposal MUST be in essay form with complete sentences and paragraphs. Lists and/or outlines will not be accepted.

You should include a cover page, formatted as shown at http://www.writinghelp-central.com/mla-sample1.html. Your title should be a two-part title for your final essay (i.e. Fairy Tales and Prostitutes: Sexualized Corpses and True Womanhood in Popular Antebellum literature). Otherwise, include all the information that is listed on the example and in the order and format shown.

On the first page of the actual proposal, you should write one to two sentences explaining what you are writing and why.

In the section labeled AUDIENCE, you will identify the audience for whom you are writing and their familiarity with the materials and jargon of the field in which you are writing.

In the section labeled RATIONALE, your proposal should identify the topic of your final paper and its relationship to the issues that we have studied in this unit. You will present a working thesis that makes some sort of argument about the topic.

In the section labeled MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY, you will detail the databases you will use to find scholarly sources, the type of hands-on research and or historical research you will do and how you will do it. Then, you will present a summary of the evidence that supports your argument, with appropriate citations.

In the section labeled TIMELINE, you should provide a detailed timeline that will include the drafts, outlines, and conference as scheduled, as well as information about when research will be completed, when you and your partners will post and read each other’s drafts outside of class, and any other work that you will do on the paper.

In a paragraph separate from the abstract/proposal (it may be on the same page, but it should clearly be separated), you will explain the problems you are having with argumentation, evidence, research, etc. This will allow me a peak at your work so far so that I can suggest other places you may go for information, scholarship, and the like.

On a separate page labeled “Annotated Bibliography,” you will list at least 6 scholarly sources that you are considering using in your paper. (Be sure to review your class notes about what does and does not constitute a scholarly source. There is also a “guide” attached to this assignment.) The list MUST adhere to MLA standards for bibliography and/or works cited pages (i.e., the list should be ordered alphabetically by the author’s last name, and each citation should be in the correct format). If you are unfamiliar with the format, use Chapter 12 of the 5th edition of the Writer’s Harbrace. After each citation, explain the
article or book’s argument and how it will benefit your essay. This explanation should be no more than FOUR sentences for each citation.

Things to note:
1. I will not accept a final paper without first approving a paper proposal. So, if you do not turn in the proposal, you will fail the course.
2. One letter grade will be deducted for failing to format the proposal as indicated here.

Grading:
As always, grading is holistic. I consider content, organization, and mechanics and style collectively; there is no set percentage for each area although failing to follow the assignment results in an automatic C or lower. I grade with an eye to the piece as a whole. In other words, if you have no mistakes in punctuation and grammar but make no true argument in your proposal, your grade will suffer dramatically. Similarly, if your ideas are solid but your grammar and punctuation are such that the reader has trouble following the ideas, your grade will also dramatically suffer. See the descriptions of each grade below.

A—The writer has a significant claim or organizing idea about the assigned topic and shows analytic ability, creativity, and powers of argumentation in presenting this claim in the light of alternatives (or counter arguments). He or she supports the primary claim with sufficient examples, details, reasons the claim is better than the alternatives, and indications of the claim’s or idea’s significance. The claim and its examples, details, and alternative viewpoints are organized so that a reader can follow as well as remain engaged (i.e. the reader is neither confused nor bored). The writer controls sentences purposefully for the level of complexity, variety, and emphasis appropriate for the claim and the reader, and he or she uses words and figures of speech so that their denotations and connotations create an appropriate tone and the effect of a writer addressing a reader. The writer follows current conventions in grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

B—The writer has a significant claim or organizing idea, reveals analytic ability, creativity, and powers of argumentation in presenting this claim or idea in light of alternatives. He or she follows current conventions in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. The writing may fall short of that of an A-level paper in one of the following: organization, sentence structure, or diction.

C—The writer has a significant claim or organizing idea and shows some, but not all, the analytic ability, creativity, or powers of argumentation evident in A and B writing. The C paper is not as controlled as the A or B paper in several of the following: organization, sentence structure, diction, usage of conventions in grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

D or E—The writer has no claim or organizing idea, or the claim or organizing idea is thin or self-evident. The writer may not reveal the analytic ability, creativity, or powers of argumentation evident in an A, B, or C paper, may lack either organization or control over sentence structure and diction, and frequently departs from conventions in grammar, spelling, and punctuation.