Three sources requirement. You must bring into your analysis:
  - one or more of the assigned course texts;
  - further material closely related to our course readings (either other texts by the same authors, or something else whose close connection historically, generically, etc., is clearly explained in the paper);
  - some matter from outside the world of the course texts (possibly the material from your final presentation; if your material does not have a distinct and analyzable artistic lens on the world—i.e. a social trend rather than a poem—be very careful that you are using it in the service of interpretive analysis: for example, arguing specifically, with detailed evidence on both sides, for what it would mean to take a “Ruskinian” approach to it, etc.).

The paper will stand or fall as a close-reading interpretation. Don’t get distracted from the main objective (and basis for evaluation), which is to apply and extend the same skills you have developed throughout the course. At a bare minimum, apply the “rule of thumb”; check that every single paragraph has an interpretive payoff, a specifically suggested and argued better understanding of what the text’s details mean. For example, “So when Kerouac writes... his focal point is not the presence of X but the absence of Y...,” with an explanation of why you claim this non-obvious interpretation.
  - For a less abstract reminder of close reading, please review the two sample papers (on Ruskin’s “Work of Iron” and on On the Road). I will expect every part of your paper to engage persistently with interpreting the details in this way. Lots of defended claims about the evidence will be much more important than the polish of your paper.
  - Specifically, make sure that your interpretive claims about the course material and course authors are clear to the reader. You may have some great claims about your outside material, too, but it is riskier to bet on it. At a minimum, does your reader understand better what makes Whitman (etc.) tick and how he transforms his material according to his vision?

Do not waste space.
  - Use the full 1500 words unless you are certain that your paper is a model of dense evidence-based argumentation and chock full of interesting analysis.
  - You have absolutely no space for summary, background, or any generalities that do not advance the argument with specific insights into the texts’ details. Jump into your material and do the work with it at once, just as Weil does not give you an introduction to the Iliad before she starts making evidence-based claims about it. Replace a chatty introduction with two sentences that forcefully show where you are taking the thesis and interpretation. Make sure your title already gets the reader interested in your ideas.
  - Less is more. Just because you have more texts to discuss, please do not try to “cover” them. You only have room to discuss in depth the strongest claims. Make them fewer in number so that you can say more about them. Omit discussion of everything about which you only have something more superficial to say.

Make the “author’s note” unnecessary! When I asked you to restate separately what your big interesting point was, and where you handled the evidence with the most sophistication, that was giving you training wheels. This time, hit your reader over the head with the strength and originality of your claims: announce them, label them, explain them, and support them as clearly as possible. If, at the end of your paper, I am having to work at figuring out what the main original points were and how they were supported with an analytical argument, then it will not be evaluated as favorably.