The following pages include a brief sample paper and commentary that illustrate much of the MLA form you will use in this course. If you have questions or run into difficulty as you write your papers, check the sample paper for possible solutions. If you still need help, you may e-mail me (write-on@ku.edu) or call me at home (842-5595, before 9:00 p.m.). Form counts for much in serious literature courses like this one. As the Course Guide explains, a paper may be penalized as much as one full letter grade for problems of form.

BASIC FORMAT

Margins and spacing: The entire paper, including quotations, Notes (if any), and Works Cited page, is double-spaced, with no blank lines between paragraphs. Be sure to put two spaces between the period ending a sentence and the start of a new one. Margins on all sides of the text are 1”; Microsoft Word defaults to 1.25” left-right, so you will need to adjust the default settings. After page one, all subsequent pages will have a header with your last name and the page number that is located flush right and 1/2” down from the top of the page: for example, “Hawk 2.”

Font and type size: The preferred font is Times New Roman, but others work also (e.g., Arial); no Courier fonts are acceptable. Type size should be no larger than 12-point, no smaller than 11-point. Never use bolding or fancy typefaces.

Italics and underlining: Titles of plays, long poems, and books always are either underlined (to indicate italics) or italicized. Use whichever you prefer, but be consistent throughout the paper.

Justification: Justify the left margin only; adjust your software program’s default values accordingly.

Hyphenation: Do not hyphenate words at the ends of lines.

Printing: For readability, please print your final draft in “letter quality” or “high” mode.

HANDLING OF QUOTATIONS AND OTHER MATTERS OF FORM

(1) Verse quotations of 1-3 lines: Incorporate up to three whole lines of verse in your own text, dividing each by a forward slash (/) with a space on either side (space / space). The quotation must fit into your prose grammatically and syntactically; that is, write your sentence to accommodate the quotation. Often, the easiest way to do this is by introducing the quotation with a colon—but you may vary the use of this. Begin and end your quotation with double quotation marks (“~”), and adjust internal quotation marks accordingly.

(2) Verse quotations of 4 or more lines: A quotation of this length must be set off from your text. Indent the block ten spaces from the left-hand margin, and do not center. Reproduce the quotation exactly as it appears in the text, with no slashes (as with a shorter quotation within your text). Avoid ending a paragraph with a set-off quotation; always comment on the significance to your essay of the quoted material.

(3) Short prose quotations (less than 4 ½ lines of your typed text): Here, too, integrate the quotation into your own sentence, making certain that it fits grammatically and syntactically.

(4) Long prose quotations (more than 4 ½ lines of your typed text): As with the longer verse quotation, simply set this off from the body of your text, indenting 10 spaces. Here, too, you do not need double quotation marks to indicate that the passage is a quotation; the fact that it is set off shows this. You must, however, preserve any quotation marks that occur within the passage.

(5) Citation of quoted material: A brief quotation integrated into your own text is separated after the final quotation
marks *by one space*, followed by the page number(s) in parentheses; if the author and/or work is not specified in your sentence, you will need to include that information for accuracy and your readers’ benefit—for example, “(Momaday 36). When a long quotation is set off from the text, however, there are no final quotation marks; instead, the quotation ends with a period, followed by *2 spaces* and then the appropriate citation in parentheses.

(6) **Ellipsis**: To conserve space you may wish to delete unneeded parts of quoted material, especially in the case of long verse or prose quotations, through the use of ellipsis ( . . . ). *Note*: Use ellipsis only when you have excised language *within* the quotation; that is, never begin or end a quotation with an ellipsis. For example:

**Incorrect**

In the historical narrative of section X, Momaday cites Mooney’s description of the Tai-me as made “. . . of dark green stone, in form rudely resembling a human head and bust . . .” (37).

**Correct**

In the historical narrative of section X, Momaday cites Mooney’s description of the Tai-me as made “of dark green stone, in form rudely resembling a human head and bust” (37).

(7) **Title**: Centered always. Good titles clearly suggest the content of the paper, and usually include the author’s name and title of the text under consideration. If your title runs beyond a full typed line, divide it on two lines in an aesthetic, balanced fashion—that is, not a full first line and then a couple of words on line two.

(8) **Specifics**: Every quotation should be given *context*, suggesting its *placement in the text* and indicating your purpose *for citing* it. Always explain the significance of the quotation as it relates to the point that you are making.

(9) **Works Cited Page**: Include entries only for works that you actually use in the paper, and add any outside readings or sources that you have found on your own. If you have questions about the citation of other sources, consult Griffith’s MLA section in *Writing Essays About Literature*, your edition of Lunsford’s *The Everyday Writer* from a previous course, or see me during office hours.

As you doubtless already know, entries for the Works Cited page are arranged alphabetically by author. Words, terms, or concepts for which you have consulted a dictionary also are included alphabetically, within double quotation marks. You needn’t provide page number(s) for dictionary entries, since these already are alphabetized and that would be redundant. You will need to give page numbers (and author, if given) for articles from reference works such as encyclopedias.

(10) **Internet sources**: Arrange alphabetically by author (if known), followed by title of the specific article in double quotation marks. If the article is unsigned, alphabetize by the first major word in the title. Next, italicize the name of the website on which the article appears, followed by the article’s specific URL. Last, include the date (inverted) when you consulted the article. Use Internet sources of the highest quality only.

(11) **Diction**: Since you will be writing academic papers for this course, your diction always should tend toward the formal—without being “stuffy,” of course. Use the third-person point-of-view, precise verbs, and avoid the use of contractions or unnecessary slang.

(11) **Revision**: For a paper to be “finished” it must be revised thoroughly several times—then carefully edited and proofed.
How to Make an MLA Header for Users of Microsoft Word™: This header, which will look like “Hawk 2,” is to be used on page 2 through the Works Cited page.

1. Go to “View” on the menu bar;
2. Click on “Header/Footer”;
3. Go to the second page of your document and place cursor in the Header box;
4. Select “Page Setup” on the Header/Footer task bar;
5. Check the option box marked “different first page” and click OK;
6. Now click on the “Insert Page Number” icon, or the page with a “#” sign icon, on the Header/Footer task bar. Page numbers will be inserted automatically;
7. Now click your cursor to the Left of the Page Number, enter your last name, and insert ONE space between name and page number;
8. If needed, move your name and page number over to the right corner of the Header Box. If you would like to format the font of your header information, highlight as normal and adjust font as you normally would;
9. With luck, you are now finished. If for some reason you have any trouble performing the above tasks, save your document and close Word™. Now reopen the document and proceed through the process again.

SAMPLE PAPER FOLLOWS
The Horse and Kiowa Tribal Identity in Momaday’s The Way to Rainy Mountain

Readers of The Way to Rainy Mountain (1969), by N. Scott Momaday (Kiowa), accompany the author as he undertakes a journey to better understand the story of his people, the lives of his family, and his personal Indian identity. Through its multilayered narrative structure, wherein Momaday divides each section into three parts—Kiowa myths and legends; historical material relevant to the tribe; and the author’s personal observations—Rainy Mountain may be seen as something of a survival document for American Indians in general and the Kiowas in particular. Thus, the book assumes a spiritual importance. In fact, the story of the Kiowas as Momaday tells it in Rainy Mountain is suffused with spirit, as seen in the ancient tribal stories and myths; the gift of Tai-me, which would become the centerpiece of the yearly Sun Dance; peyotism; and more. Moreover, after their journey brought them to the bright and vast expanses of the south-central plains, the Kiowas became forever wedded to the buffalo materially, physically, and spiritually; indeed, the buffalo became the living, earthly embodiment of the sun, and therefore an essential marker of Kiowa tribal identity. Naturally, Rainy Mountain includes the buffalo in a number of its parts, along with another creature of great significance to Plains Indians: the horse. As Momaday’s narrative shows, the acquisition of the horse by the Kiowas was a watershed event, one that would change their culture forever physically, materially, and
spiritually. Like the buffalo, the horse became for the Kiowas an irreplaceable marker of tribal identity, and one that would be stripped away from them—as were the buffalo and the Sun Dance ceremony earlier.

In his poem “How to Write the Great American Indian Novel” (1996), Sherman Alexie (Spokane/Coeur d’Alene) humorously points to the status conferred by whites on Indians who ride horses: “White women feign disgust / at the savage in blue jeans and T-shirt, but secretly lust after him. / White women dream about half-breed Indian men from horse cultures” (ll. 23-25). Alexie may be right about white admiration of horse culture tribes, but the association of Plains Indians with the horse is completely natural. According to Darrell Robes Kipp (Blackfeet), “The Indian and the horse were compatible in every way” (2), and James Welch (Blackfeet/Gros Ventre) explains in detail in his history, Killing Custer: The Battle of the Little Bighorn and the Fate of the Plains Indians (1994), how “Plains Indians and horses were truly made for each other” (138). As Welch shows, the acquisition of the horse accounts for great changes in the complexity of Plains Indian cultures in providing increased mobility, greater ease and success in hunting and making war, and as a valuable trading commodity with other tribes (136-39). In the historical narrative of section XVIII of Rainy Mountain, Momaday cites anthropologist James Mooney, who studied and recorded Kiowa culture for many years.

It is unnecessary to dilate on the revolution made in the life of the Indian by the possession of the horse. . . . With the horse he was transformed into the daring buffalo hunter, able to procure in a single day enough food to supply his family for a year, leaving him free then to sweep the plains with his war parties along a range of a thousand miles. (61)

Truly, one cannot separate, without violence, Indians of the Plains from their horses, either in fact
or the imagination. Kipp, for example, writes that “In 1910, older Blackfoot men lamented the loss of their horses more than the loss of their land. The affinity between horses and Indians remains one of the most powerful images in American history” (2).

This affinity, this oneness, this inseparability is Momaday’s point in the mythic narrative of section XX:

Once there was a man who owned a fine hunting horse. It was black and fast and afraid of nothing. When it was turned upon an enemy it charged in a straight line and struck at full speed; the man need have no hand upon the rein. But, you know, that man knew fear. Once during a charge he turned that animal from its course. That was a bad thing. The hunting horse died of shame. (70; italics in original)

The highly-prized, skilled animal here is no beast of burden, but rather “a fine hunting horse,” fearless, a creature that lives for the hunt and war—virtually, an equine warrior. In the short sentences and plain language that characterize many parts of the mythic narrative in Rainy Mountain, the “message” of the tale is clear: the rider is not worthy of such a creature, and the horse dies because he is forced to do something unnatural, turning away from its target in an image of fear. Of the Plains tribes Welch writes that “Almost all of the soldiers who came to fight them, from generals to privates, remarked on the expertise of the Indian horsemen, how horse and man were almost one” (139). As a tribal tale, the story of the horse divided from its rider by fear provides the Kiowas with an exemplum of courage still useful today in terms of modern Indian survival

[PAPER CONTINUES]


Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001