ENGL 170
Rutkowski
Research/Criticism Assignment

Due: W Nov 30, at film screening in Milne @ 4 PM (or, if you’re not attending the film screening, in my mailbox in Welles 226 by 4 PM)
Assignment is worth 15% of your final grade

1. Choose a topic related to *The Scarlet Letter* which interests you – it can be a character (e.g. Hester or Pearl), a theme (e.g. “the role of nature” or “sin and punishment”) or some other element of the text (e.g. the relationship of the Custom House introduction to the novel, the importance of Puritan history, etc.).

2. Using the MLA database, available through the library, locate and obtain three critical articles that treat your chosen topic. These can be chapters from books or articles in scholarly journals. **Date requirements:** One must be from the 1960s or 70s; one from the 1980s or 90s; and one from the years 2000-2005. The articles we’ve already read do not count.

3. Please remember our library might not own copies of what you need, so request the items you want from Interlibrary Loan as soon as possible.

4. Read each article and write a brief (100-200 words) summary of each. Quote from the article when necessary, giving correct citations.

5. Last, write a response (1-2 pages, double-spaced) which critically evaluates all three articles – which parts of each article did you find convincing, which parts seemed to be a stretch? Which one best represented your view of the novel? In addition, did you find any discernible pattern related to the date of composition? In other words, does literary criticism seem to have changed through time, or were your three critics interested in basically the same things? **The best responses will include specific evidence from both the articles and Hawthorne’s novel.**

Format for assignment (everything should be part of the same document):

1. Each article should be listed (in alphabetical order, according to the author’s last name) with a full citation (must be MLA-style).

2. Follow each citation with the summary, using MLA internal-style citations for page references.

3. End with your critical response

Evaluation (what I’ll look for when I grade):

1. meeting all requirements of assignment
2. careful, thorough summaries
3. critical, thoughtful responses to each
4. a clear ability to distinguish between the ideas and words of your sources and your own ideas and words
5. correct MLA-style documentation of each article (see the section on “citing articles in periodicals” in the *MLA Handbook*) and correct parenthetical documentation when you quote from your sources (see the chapter on “Documentation: Citing Sources in the Text” in the *MLA Handbook*).