

In this essay, I want you to draw broader connections among sonnets in a sequence. Elect either Petrarch, Sidney, Spenser or Shakespeare as the author you want study.

Locate at least 4 sonnets from the particular author chosen that share a thematic link.

Write a paper that explores this link, looking closely at parts of the set of sonnets you have identified to examine how the author establishes and develops that particular theme.

We have raised many thematic issues thus far. I list some of them (by no means all!) below, to help you get started. Clearly many of the connective ideas I list below interpenetrate, so you may want to examine a particular combination.

- death and mortality
 - time
 - writing
 - power
 - seduction
 - interiority (by which I mean a particular sense of the self)
 - battle
 - desire
 - relationship to God
- etc.

Clearly, if you pick a topic -- for instance, power -- you will need to specify the nature of that topic (here, the nature of power) more closely. After all, there is a power relationship involved in the relationship between the lover and the desired woman; a divine power in relation to man; a poetic power derived from writing; a set of power relationships characteristic of a particular social formation (seen, perhaps, most clearly in Wyatt), and so on. You cannot, of course, deal with all aspects of such a topic, but you do need to narrow your sense of the poems to the point where you have a topic that is sufficiently rich but not too capacious. For instance, as I have suggested in class, in Petrarch one can trace a displacement from earthly power relationships that characterise his relationship to Laura alive, to a theological relationship in which Laura's role shifts to something more like an intercessor between the subject and God. This description picks out and relates two dimensions of the topic of power, relating them to one another.

I want you to attempt a similar kind of analysis of the poems you choose, not aiming to interpret all of them closely and in their entirety, but reading closely nonetheless the appropriate lines or verses from those poems that allow you to present your case most strongly.

Since I have delayed in giving you the description, I wish to extend the due date a little, though I don't want you to have these hanging over and darkening your spring break.

Papers are due 2 days after L11. Length : 4-6 pages,
12 pt font, 1 inch margins, Times Roman or equivalent.