

Final Thesis Paper

The moment has come, dear grasshoppers! You will now be writing a thesis paper on *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien.

Please choose one of the following prompts:

Central Theme from the Year	Prompt
The Illusion of the American Dream	According to Tim O'Brien, is the American Dream possible? Why or why not? Pick a character or two from <i>The Things They Carried</i> and discuss how he/she/they have experienced the American Dream.
Love, Lust and Friendship	Find several moments where one character reaches out to another to try to form a relationship, be it platonic or romantic. How do these different interactions relate? What is O'Brien saying about human nature and how it exists in war?
Gender, Sex, and Sexuality	How do characters in <i>The Things They Carried</i> perform their gender? What happens when/if they perform an action that is usually associated with another gender? What is O'Brien saying about how war impacts gender performance?
The Role of the Individual in Society	All of the soldiers had lives before they were drafted into the war. Trace how a character's mode of challenging society evolves over time or explore a set of scenes where characters challenge society in similar ways. What is O'Brien saying about individuality, freedom and patriotism during the Vietnam War?
Personality as a Product of Circumstance	According to Tim O'Brien, are the characters in <i>The Things They Carried</i> predetermined to have certain personalities or are their tendencies, needs and motivations shaped by their unique set of circumstances? Trace one or more characters and the ways that their experiences influence their behavior. What might O'Brien be saying about human nature and how it exists in War?
Rugged Individualism	Create your own prompt and pursue a theme that you're interested in that we have touched on this year! (If you go this route, please come check with me to get your question/topic approved)

Due Dates

Wednesday, 4/15, 11:59pm // Thesis Statement

Sunday, 4/19, 11:59pm // Outline

Friday, 4/24, 3:24pm // Deadline to submit document to me confirming that you worked on your paper with a tutor from the writing center

Sunday, 4/26, 11:59pm // Thesis Paper

Overview of Expectations

1. Structure
 - a. Thesis Paragraph
 - i. Goes from broad to specific, setting up your argument. ▽
 - b. **Thesis Statement Framework**
 - i. Specific Details // Examples from text
 - ii. Argument // Your opinion
 - iii. So What // Authorial Intent
 - c. Body Paragraphs
 - i. Build on each other
 - ii. Move the argument forward
 - iii. Are text driven
2. Quotation Analysis
 - a. Use at least one quotation per paragraph
 - b. Quotations come from a variety of sections in the novel and all tie together logically
 - c. Use Close Reading techniques to build your argument
 - i. Do this when appropriate; don't include all six stages just because.
 - ii. Rather, figure out how the author builds the meaning that you are drawing from the passage.
 - d. **Close Reading Framework**
 - i. Find the literal meaning of each line or sentence
 - ii. Analyze interesting words
 - iii. Analyze interesting phrases
 - iv. Analyze grammar, punctuation and tense
 - v. Explore how larger themes of the novel make us understand this excerpt better
 - vi. Identify how this passage contributes to the major themes in the novel as a whole
3. Character Complexity
 - a. Try not to reduce characters to cliches or single motives/modes of behavior
 - b. Use Character Portrait techniques to build your argument
 - i. Do this when appropriate; don't include all seven aspects just because.
 - ii. Rather, figure out how the author builds the meaning that you are drawing from the passage.
 - c. **Character Portrait Framework**
 - i. Heart // Special Relationships
 - ii. Spine // Important Goal
 - iii. Muscles // Strengths & Weaknesses
 - iv. Accessories // Symbols
 - v. Mirror // Self Awareness
 - vi. Thought // How text portrays character's thoughts
 - vii. Speech // Dialogue