***Girl with a Pearl Earring* Unit Essay**

**Traditional Essay Topics**

1. Artistic integrity. How an artist reacts to criticism or demands against the purity of her/his work. Who owns the essence of a work of art (the artist, those who influence the art, or those who fund it), and what is its essence (the paint and canvas or something larger, such as its lessons or its legacy)? Consider works of art and entertainment both modern and historical.

2A. Loyalty/expectation versus desire/truth of self.
Consider various anecdotes in history and current events of those who go against the grain for what they believe in.
2B. Role-playing versus individual identity. Roles of nobles, servants, and other stations; societal boundaries between employer/employee. Consider examples of when people have stepped outside their roles to either do good or harm.

3. Intimacy and various dynamics between people/characters. Griet and Vermeer’s intimacy (generally speaking), various forms of companionship and relationships, nonconventional bonds.
What are our closest relationships based upon? (Learning/self-development, dependency/desire to take care of someone, economics, desire, alikeness, fulfillment of roles and expectations, etc.)

4. Religious conflict and the effect of religious symbolism/iconography. The social split between Protestant and Catholic; the ‘otherness’ of Catholicism to Griet. Consider other parallels historical and modern.

**Alternative Research Essay Topics**

1. Identify and discuss one or more artists, or an art movement, and argue how/why they are revolutionary.

2. Argue a thematic claim based off of the ideas or theories behind the works of famous artists. If your artist(s) is historical, how is their work relevant in the modern world?

3. Visit the St. Louis Art Museum's modern wing and write a thorough interpretation of the works you observe. What role does modern art play in our St. Louis community?

**Basic requirements:**3-4 full pages, double-spaced, standard 12. pt font
MLA heading and formatting
10-12 or more cited quotes or paraphrases (novel and/or outside research)
Pre-approved topic via conferencing. Submit on Turnitin.com by Tues. Apr. 3rd.