***The Scarlet Letter* Essay name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**PART ONE, RESEARCH**

RESEARCH DIRECTIONS: You will be given three full days during the midterm week to complete the research portion of your TSL essay. You should complete formative research on both Hawthorne’s life and the literary movement of which he was a part (for the sake of completion, we will fudge a bit and claim that he was a transcendentalist). Your research will result in a 2-3 page research summary of Hawthorne’s life, his connections to the transcendentalism movement (including his disavowal of it), his transcendentalist beliefs and how his life informed those beliefs. You will use this research to help you complete the essay portion of the assignment. Your research should focus on (without being limited to) answering the basic questions below.

New Historicism questions

1. How does the work interpret and present historical events that occurred during the author’s lifetime?

2. Does the work's presentation support or condemn the events in question?

3. How does the work interpret/present political leaders and political movements?

4. How does the work consider traditionally marginalized populations?

Biographical Criticism questions

1. How did the region in which the author was raised influence him?

2. How did the author’s economic status influence him?

3. What were the author’s religious beliefs?

4. What were the circumstances of the author’s education?

**PART TWO, ESSAY WRITING**

ESSAY DIRECTIONS: You will choose either a prompt from Section 1 or Section 2 (please be sure to circle which prompt you have chosen). The essay will be written in class on 11.1. You will need your research and your copy of TSL (in addition to any texts from Emerson or Thoreau).

**SECTION 1, NEW HISTORICISM: These essay prompts will focus on analyzing the novel in the context of the Transcendentalist movement. Your essay should include research you have completed on Transcendentalism in addition to quotes from the novel and other texts we have read this unit.**

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| PROMPT 1 | Hawthorne is a critic of Puritan beliefs—or, more accurately, a critic of a culture that does not allow one to choose their own morality. Analyze Hawthorne's critique on Puritan culture and how this criticism reveals his transcendentalist beliefs. Your analysis may include reference to Emerson's "Self-Reliance" to support a definition of transcendentalist beliefs in addition to the research you conducted. |
| PROMPT 2 | Hester and Dimmesdale break the law. They are sinners in the eyes of the Puritan society in which they live. Choose one or both of the characters and analyze their relationship to sin, how they deal with it and what the consequences of their sin is. Your analysis may reference ideas in Thoreau's "Civil Disobedience" or Emerson's "Self-Reliance” in addition to the research you conducted. |
| PROMPT 3 | Pearl's symbolic role in the novel is interesting and helps Hawthorne exemplify many transcendentalist beliefs. Hawthorne himself was not a transcendentalist, but he did agree with many of their tenets. Analyze Pearl's symbolic role in the novel. You may relate her role to ideas Emerson expresses in either (or both) "Self-Reliance" or "Nature” in addition to the research you conducted. |

**SECTION 2, BIOGRAPHICAL CRITICISM: These essay prompts will focus on analyzing the novel in the context of Hawthorne’s personal life Your essay should include research you have completed on Hawthorne himself in addition to quotes from the novel.**

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| PROMPT 4 | Hawthorne does not believe that either Hester or Dimmesdale did anything wrong when they had an affair. His criticism of Hester and Dimmesdale does not lie in the crime for which they are publically and/or privately punished, but for their reaction to these punishments. Analyze how Hawthorne demonstrates Hester or Dimmesdale’s punishment. Your analysis should include biographical details from Hawthorne’s life that explains why he does not agree with the Puritan society which punishes Hester and Dimmesdale. |
| PROMPT 5 | The private lives and public lives of all three adult characters in *The Scarlet Letter* demonstrate Hawthorne's belief that one must "be true" to oneself. Choose either Dimmesdale, Hester or Chillingworth and explain how they fail Hawthorne's simple dictum. Your essay should reference Hawthorne’s own personal life and why he felt it was important for one to “be true.” |

**RUBRIC name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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| Intro and Thesis: A central idea guides the paper. The thesis is analytical in nature. | 10 |  |
| BP 1: Correctly structured using the Toulmin model. **Claim**/topic sentence states your interpretation of the novel and should show a clear relation to the thesis. **Grounds** are used from TSL to prove your interpretation, not to prove plot points. **Warrant** clearly explains how grounds proves claim and/or the overall thesis. Avoids mere repetition of claim. | 15 |  |
| BP 2: Correctly structured using the Toulmin model. **Claim**/topic sentence states your interpretation of the novel and should show a clear relation to the thesis. **Grounds** are used from TSL to prove your interpretation, not to prove plot points. **Warrant** clearly explains how grounds proves claim and/or the overall thesis. Avoids mere repetition of claim. | 15 |  |
| Research: You include the research you conducted on Transcendentalism and Hawthorne’s life. Document is MLA formatted, and a copy was submitted to turnitin.com. At least four outside sources are considered and cited. Two sources must come from the following site: http://www.literaryhistory.com/19thC/Hawthorne.htm | 10 |  |
| Total | 50 | Formal Points |

You are not allowed to cite “dumping ground” sites (Bio.com, Wikipedia.com, sparknotes.com). Here are a few websites with links to articles you should consult:

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| Lit criticism dealing specifically with TSL | <http://www.literaryhistory.com/19thC/Hawthorne.htm> |
| NH’s time at Brook Farm: | http://www.hawthorneinsalem.org/Life&Times/BiographicalInfo/BrookFarm/Introduction.html |
| A good source for bios on NH | http://www.ipl.org/div/litcrit/bin/litcrit.out.pl?au=haw-2 |
| An *extensive* biography of NH’s life | http://xroads.virginia.edu/~ma01/lisle/dial/hawthorne.html |
| A NH meme because memes | Image result for nathaniel hawthorne memes |

Seminar Prep name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**We will have a seminar during midterm week to wrap up the novel. In order to participate in the seminar, you must (obviously) have finished the book. Additionally, prep yourself for the seminar by answering five of the questions below. Answers can be typed or hand-written and should be completed in 3-4 sentences (or about a paragraph per answer).**

1. Hawthorne lived for a time at the Utopian, communal, transcendentalist community Brook Farm. Brook Farmers believed that by sharing the workload, ample time would be available for leisure activities and intellectual pursuits. How does this idea of communal, group living where all members share in the work contrast with life in the Puritan community Hawthorne describes in TSL?

2. Beginning in 1842, Hawthorne and Emerson shared ideas as they walked around the town of Concord. Upon Hawthorne's death in '64, his widow called Emerson "the greatest man that ever lived." Cite specific passages that demonstrate Emerson's possible influence on Hawthorne's writings.

3. Transcendentalism was clearly a big influence on Hawthorne's thinking. Cite and analyze passages that specifically refer to the key transcendentalist beliefs of self-reliance and purity of nature.

4. The novel is symbolically set in a Puritanical society. How does Hawthorne criticize the values of this society to advocate his transcendentalist views on individualism, freedom and nature.

5. Hawthorne demands that his readers "Be true!" to themselves. To what extent, if any, are the four main characters in the novel true to themselves?

6. Who deserves the most blame for the events of *The Scarlet Letter*? Which character is most at fault for what happens in the novel? Is there something else that can be blamed?

7. Are Hester and Dimmesdale guilty of anything? Do they deserve to be punished as severely as they are? What does Hawthorne believe and how does this compare to what the Puritan community about which he is writing believes?

8. Pearl is a symbolic catalyst in the novel. What ideals is Hawthorne using Pearl to exemplify? Explain Pearl's symbolic importance through a close examination of a minimum of three passages.

9. Chillingworth's role in the novel is antagonist. He pushes Dimmesdale further into guilt and keeps him alive to exacerbate his suffering. Discuss Chillingworth's symbolic role as "the leech" through a careful examination of at minimum of three passages. Constantly examine what Hawthorne is criticizing by considering how Chillingworth represents "anti-transcendentalist" beliefs.

10. Hester's punishment is public, but she chooses to internalize it and claim herself to be a martyr. To what was Hester martyring herself? What transcendentalist commentary is Hawthorne making by having Hester punish herself?