The History of Scholarship Project

Objectives: Students will apply research skills from the Online Course and develop a presentation that demonstrates their understanding of how scholarship on a single work of literature changes over time.

Course work or assignment under way: As an oral presentation, this project can be used as a midterm assignment, or it can be adapted as classwork. In classes with less research experience, the instructor might consider scaffolding the assignment, that is, requiring that an outline and preliminary research be submitted prior to the final presentation.

Project summary: Working in groups of three to five, students will use the *MLA International Bibliography* to develop a ten-minute presentation that traces the history of scholarship on a single work of fiction, poetry, or drama.

Instructors should offer students a choice from five to ten works that are relevant to the course. It is strongly recommended that instructors search the bibliography themselves before assigning short stories, as publications on short stories are sometimes indexed under the title of the collection in which the short story first appeared.

Questions for students to consider:

- What themes and patterns do you find in the subject terms for relevant records in the bibliography? How do the terms vary from decade to decade?
- When do publications about the work of literature seem to peak? Why might this be the case? (Feel free to chart any other patterns you spot.)
- What types of literary criticism (psychoanalytic, reader-response, etc.) on the work are most prevalent? With regard to the work on which you are presenting, how does the use of literary criticism vary from decade to decade?