MLA format for writing assignments

Writing assignments in English studies should be produced following the format and style guidelines in the *MLA Style Manual* or the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers.* This handout provides a brief summary of important elements with references to appropriate sections of the *Handbook* (sixth edition, 2003).

For additional help, see the sample assignments online, or the Purdue OWL's materials: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/

If you have a question about formatting, please ask in class or office hours before an assignment is due.

- Essays should be typed using a highly legible serif font such as Times New Roman, Palatino, or Garamond. Decorative fonts or those which resemble handwriting are not acceptable. Font size should be 11 or 12 points. [4.1]

- Use a one inch margin on all four sides of the paper. [4.3]

- Create a header one-half inch from the top of the page, right aligned, which is your last name and the page number. [4.5]

- Cover pages are unnecessary. Your essay should begin with your name and information about the class. Identify the assignment clearly. [4.5]

- Double-space every paragraph. Never use "justified" or "full justified" alignment. Turn off automatic hyphenation. [4.1, 4.4]

- Capitalize names and titles appropriately. If you use abbreviations, follow established standards. [3.4, 3.6, 3.8, 7.7]

- Every quotation should be accompanied by an appropriate in-text citation—usually a parenthetical reference. [6.2, 6.3]

- In-text citations should follow the appropriate guidelines. [6.4]

- Integrate quotations into prose carefully, using brackets and ellipses to show any changed or deleted text. [3.7.5, 3.7.6]

- Long quotations should be printed in a separate indented paragraph. Set off long quotations one inch from the left margin. [3.7.2, 4.3]

- Include a "Works Cited" section at the end of your essay. [5.3]

- Every entry in your Works Cited should follow the appropriate guidelines. [5.6–5.9]

- Use spell-check. Print a draft of your essay and read it carefully with a pencil handy. Mark up any improvements or corrections you wish to make, and then make the corrections on-screen, checking them off on your draft as you go. [1.9]

- Print your final essay using plain white paper, preferably on one side only. [4.1, 4.2]

- If your essay is two or more pages in length, it must be stapled or paper-clipped. Do not use plastic binders or portfolios for single assignments. [4.9]