Length and Due Dates

**Length**: 3-4 pages, formatted as described in the “Essay” portion of the syllabus  
**First Draft Due**: Monday, July 7; **bring on disk and in hard copy**  
**Final Draft Due**: Thursday, July 10; **bring on disk and in hard copy**

Assignment

You may write on one of the following topics:

1) Why does *Quicksand* end as it does?

2) How does *Quicksand* highlight its protagonist's struggle for self-definition as Black or biracial and female?

3) Thadious Davis observes that each space Helga moves to in *Quicksand* “represent[s] a stage in [her] developing consciousness” (xvii). Do you agree with Davis? Why or why not?

Guidelines

1) Although I have posed specific questions about the text, you will need to focus the topic and to develop a clear, defendable argument that you can support with selected references to the text. For example, an essay on space and the development of Helga’s consciousness cannot discuss each setting. It can concentrate on the settings that mark the most significant moments in her development, or it can argue for a lack of development by comparing Naxos and the southern town Helga moves to with Pleasant Green.

2) Let your argument dictate the organizational format of your essay. Just because the novel has a particular narrative order does not mean that your essay must follow that order.

3) Close textual analysis will serve as your main source of evidence. In supporting your argument, you will need to pay attention to the novel's language and structure.

4) Remember that you are writing to an audience who has read *Quicksand*. Therefore, you do not need to summarize the plot in your essay. Instead, you should incorporate summary, paraphrase, or quotation into an analysis. Each reference to the text should support your argument.

5) When writing about literature, use the present tense (for example, “Helga Crane travels to Denmark,” or “Anne disapproves of Audrey”)

6) If you're having difficulty devising an approach to the essay, or if you want to discuss ideas-in-progress, come to my office hours or email me to set up an appointment.