At this point in the semester, you’ve selected a text for your research project, you’ve turned in a preliminary proposal outlining what you plan to focus on in the text, and you’ve had some practice reading and summarizing critical articles. The next step is to continue to collect, read, and evaluate possible sources that pertain to your topic. You will condense all of this research into an annotated bibliography—the next formal assignment in the course.

An annotated bibliography is a list of sources that you plan to use, alphabetized and cited according to MLA format. What makes the bibliography annotated is that, following each citation, you will include a paragraph that explains the source in more detail. Each of your annotations must do the following things:

1. Introduce the source by contextualizing it—in other words, explain what the source is (a journal article, a book, an interview, etc.) and where it comes from (a scholarly journal on film; a book of essays on a specific author, etc.) One sentence.
2. Summarize, as accurately and objectively as possible, the main argument or content of the source. Be specific in this section—don’t merely list topics covered, but sum up the gist of the actual arguments made, paying special attention to whatever aspects of the source seem most relevant to your own research project. Four to seven sentences.
3. Evaluate the source in terms of both reliability and usefulness to your project. Who is the author and what are his or her qualifications? Did the source go through some kind of editing or peer-review process? How current is it? How well-respected is the publishing venue? Does the source seem as if it will be useful to you in writing the actual research paper? What information does it provide that you will be able to use? Three to five sentences.

This assignment will be turned in in stages. You’ll notice that the class syllabus lists “sample annotations” as being due before the full-fledged annotated bibliography is due. For the sample annotations stage, you’ll need to have 4 items listed in your bibliography. Your final bibliography will include 8 items.

Due Dates:
Draft of Sample Annotations—Monday, October 13
Final Version of Sample Annotations—Friday, October 17
Final Annotated Bibliography—Friday, October 24
Sample Annotated Bibliography Entry


This is a scholarly essay included in a book that provides the full text of Frankenstein as well as a collection of essays that demonstrate various literary approaches to the novel. In it, Montag points out that a Marxist reading of a work “seeks to unmask” (300) the historical context associated with a literary work, to show how the work is a product of its historical moment. His reading of Frankenstein examines the French Revolution in France as well as the industrial revolution in England to show how the novel’s theme parallels specific concerns of Shelley’s time period. Both revolutions attempted to create societies based on reason and justice, but both revolutions “collapsed into tyranny or chaos” (301) after the elites were forced to mobilize the poor masses. Shelley’s monster in the novel, for whom readers are supposed to feel both pity and fear, is representative of the “emergent proletariat” (303) of both revolutionary movements. Yet, Montag also argues that we cannot simply equate the monster with the proletariat; literary works often display the same contradictions and discrepancies of their historical time period, and Frankenstein is no different. Some of the contradictions or “gaps” (308) in Shelley’s novel include the fact that Victor believes he is in charge of his own destiny while readers see him as the servant of science as well as Shelley’s reluctance to describe actual technology or to depict the modern, industrialized world. This article is a reliable source. The author, Warren Montag, is a professor of English and Comparative Literature at Occidental College in Los Angeles. In addition, the essay appears in a collection that was published by a reputable press (Bedord) and edited by a professor at the University of Texas at Arlington. While I’m focusing specifically on the relationship between Victor and Clerval in my own paper, Montag’s ideas about Victor as representing Enlightenment values will be useful to me. I see Clerval, who studies chivalric tales, as a Romantic, anti-Enlightenment figure, who serves as a contrast to Victor.