

### Essay 3: Cross Cultural Critical Analysis – The American Dream

Over time the American dream has proved a resilient and unique concept that Americans have come to understand and define in different ways as relevant to their own life narratives and experiences. Not defined or rooted in lineage, religion, or some form of a shared history, the American dream, unlike any other form of national identity in the world, is shaped and defined by collective values. These values and principles rooted in individualism, self-actualization, and self-reliance where people are able to fulfill their own destiny, be self-reliant, and believe in the promise that through hard work and perseverance life can be different and better. The apparent timeless notions of these values in relationship to pursuing and defining what we now understand as the American dream are deeply embedded in the fabric of the cultural landscape of America because they inform and preserve the mythology of the American experience.

**Basic Assignment.** Write an essay using texts from each era of American Literature (designated on the syllabus) covered this semester. Examine how each selection offers insight to the understanding of the American dream. What is the American dream? How has it changed, if any, from colonial times? How is this dream different for people from various backgrounds: gender, class, and race?

Use these questions to take a stance on the following topic:

Is the American dream an attainable achievement that society encourages or is it a myth that endures and lasts because it promotes an aspirational experience that both lies and provides fulfillment in one's life (or in the lives of other Americans)?

#### **Suggested Readings (Weekly Assignments from syllabus):**

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|--|---|
| Columbus: Letters                              | Irving: "Rip Van Winkle"                          |
| Emerson: Nature                                | Hawthorne: "Young Goodman Brown"                  |
| Thoreau: Walden (Chapters 1, 2)                | Whitman: Leaves of Grass ("Song of Myself")       |
| Ellison: Invisible Man (Chapter I)             | Miller: Death of a Salesman                       |
| Martin Luther King Jr.: "I Have a Dream"       | James Baldwin: "Going to Meet the Man"            |
| Richard Wright: "The Man Who Was Almost a Man" | Cotton Mather: The Wonders of the Invisible World |

My expectations for this paper are fundamental:

- A paper topic that follows the instructions above.
- A thesis statement or central claim that organizes the argument.
- A clear, logical organization.
- The use of textual evidence to support your thesis and main points.
- Coherent, logical explanation of textual evidence that supports the thesis and main points.
- Clear and correct prose.
- Accurate documentation of sources.
- Presentation of this paper during the final week of class.

Please use the MLA style guide to format your essay and citations.

**Due Date:** **Tuesday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2017** - Length. 4 pages (800-1200 words).

## **Final Research Essay: Oral Presentation Instructions**

All students enrolled in ENG 235-05 are required to present a 10-minute oral presentation using digital media during the final sessions of the course. Your presentation should generally follow the outline of your paper and should include a brief introduction that provides the audience with a frame of reference, a main body of the presentation and a strong conclusion. Your goal is to engage the audience effectively and to get your message across.

### **FORMAT**

Your presentation must incorporate some elements of digital multimedia (images, charts, graphs, diagrams, video, and audio) to accompany and illustrate your spoken text. Traditionally, most students have used PowerPoint to compose their presentations, but if you would like to use a different platform (Prezi), it is allowed. Each presentation should include a minimum of 10 slides and you are allowed to compose notes for each slide (this can usually be done within the notes section of your presentation file which is not visible onscreen).

### **SLIDES**

Your first slide must be a title slide with your name on it. The remaining slides should be a combination of texts, photos and diagrams. All images should be referenced in your presentation. List the source (book or web site) in small type below the image. You may include text in your slides to outline your main talking points or to list important facts (use at least 16 pt. font so your audience can read the text), but avoid placing too much text on a single slide and **DO NOT** put your notes on each slide and read from them during your presentation. Try not to include slides that are all text. Proofread your slides carefully to catch spelling and grammatical errors.

### **ORAL REQUIREMENTS**

When giving your presentation, face your audience and speak loudly and clearly, making eye contact with people around the room. At the time of your presentation, please introduce yourself and let the audience know how you obtained the research and what interested you about the project. Use your note cards to remind yourself of what you want to say, but avoid reading too much directly from the cards. If you are using technical terms, local place names, or other unfamiliar vocabulary, find out the correct pronunciations ahead of time.

### **CHECKLISTS FOR A SUCCESSFUL PRESENTATION**

1. Email file or link to your instructor at least one day prior to your presentation.
2. Make sure any movie files or sound files in your presentation are included in a folder with your presentation file or they will not work.

### **ORAL PRESENTATIONS USING POWERPOINT/PREZI**

1. Presentation logically organized, accurate, and complete.
2. Slides relevant and helpful in successfully teaching about your topic.
3. Minimum 10 slides, including title slide.
4. Slides include a combination of text, images, and diagrams – no slides with only text.
5. Images referenced on the slide.
6. **DO NOT** read from your slides.
7. Speak clearly and project your voice.
8. Make eye contact with your audience.
9. Correct pronunciation of technical terms, place names, and unfamiliar vocabulary.
10. Practice your presentation, and stay within the allotted time.

**Due Dates:** May 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017 - Length: 10 slides (minimum).