1. The length of the paper must be 7-10 full pages—no more, no less.

2. The paper must use Modern Language Association 8 (MLA8). Whether the sources are directly quoted, paraphrased, or summarized, credit must be given to them using MLA in-text citations as well as a works cited page at the end of your paper. Note: A paper which does not use current MLA format, or does not cite its sources, will receive an automatic “F.” You have resources to guide you—use them!

3. The paper must use 2-3 secondary sources in an in-depth way. Acceptable secondary sources include scholarly articles and biographies found on databases, and books/book chapters. All sources must be print-based—that means databases are okay but websites are not. Your class notes, other class handouts, and textbook do not count towards your required 2-3 sources, although you are welcome to use them.

4. The paper must be typed in size 12 Times New Roman. Please double-space, use normal margins, and include page #s on your essay. Also include a title page (name, class and section, instructor’s name, paper title, email address), as well as a Works Cited page in MLA format.

5. You are not writing a book report. This paper should be primarily comprised of your analysis, opinions and ideas about the literature. You are using research to support points you’ve already made, and to provide background, historical, etc. information.

6. Papers will NOT be accepted late.

7. This essay is worth 20% of your course grade.

Important Dates:

W 4/10 – Meet in L-311 for mandatory research skills workshop
M 4/15 – Meet in NAB 0101 for mandatory source collecting workshop
W 4/17 – Thesis and Bibliography due on BB
W 4/24 – Online Assignment! Writer’s Review Workshop (no class mtg today)
W 5/1 – Final draft due in class and on BB
**Possible Topic Choices / Starting Points:**

- You may write about any primary piece of literature that we have read in class this semester. You may write about a text for which you’ve already written an essay, but your topic should be different.

- Compare and contrast any two authors from the same literary period and discuss how they are different despite being lumped together. You should prove your points through an overview of the literary period and a close analysis of the literature.

- We have discussed quite a few authors who seem to straddle more than one literary period in their writing. Discuss how literary periods are not always black and white and prove your point with close analysis of the literature.

- Choose a minority group and discuss how they are represented (or misrepresented) in American Literature. Write an original thesis and then back it up with evidence from the text as well as your secondary sources.

- Choose the author you enjoyed the most (or the least) this semester and try to pinpoint the reason for your like (or dislike). Then turn that opinion into an argument and back it up with evidence from the text as well as your secondary sources.

- Write an original thesis about any one author’s work and back it up with evidence from the text as well as your secondary sources.

- **Got a great idea that you don’t see here? Go for it, or feel free to run it by me for approval.**

**Important Notes:**

- You should analyze and discuss the literature, and incorporate a discussion of the secondary sources. Remember, this is not an essay about what the critics think of the literature — your voice should be dominant throughout your essay. You should write an interpretative essay which integrates a discussion of the research solely as a means to strengthen your argument.

- Note, you may use additional primary materials but this does not take the place of doing research. You will still need 3 secondary sources in addition to your primary source materials.

- We will discuss this assignment further in class. When we do so, please pay attention and make sure you ask whatever questions you might have.

- Note: A paper with confirmed evidence of plagiarism will automatically fail and will be subject to the college’s Policy on Academic Integrity (posted on your syllabus). Plagiarized papers cannot be redone or made-up.

- If you are having trouble with any part of this assignment—choosing a topic, finding sources, documentation, etc—please make an appointment to see me or visit the Writing Center for assistance.