**EN 305 American Literature**

**Fall 2020**

**Literary Analysis Paper**

**Directions:** Please select *one* of the following topics/set of questions to use as the basis of this paper:

* In Crèvecouer’s *Letters from an American Farmer*, he asks the question, “What is an American?” How have American writers attempted to answer this question? Select **three** authors that we have read and analyze the ways in which they engage with Crèvecouer’s question, defining, reinforcing, and/or challenging his ideas.
* In our reading, we have continued to encounter texts that could fit in the category of “re-declarations of independence.” In other words, texts in which the author appropriates or refers to the ideals of the American Revolution, especially as embodied in the Declaration, to illustrate a gap between these ideals and the realities of American culture, politics, and society. Freedom, these authors point out, was not an absolute principle, but was contingent and relative. The reality of freedom was that as a social principle it was inherently limited, and its limitations served certain interests and disserved others. Write a paper in which you analyze **three** texts that you see as “re-declarations of independence,” illustrating how they measure America’s potential against its actualities.
* Select three texts (for poetry, you may choose a poet, rather than one specific poem) that address the lives of women in America between 1820-1914.  Looking at these portrayals as a group, what generalizations occur to you about the status of women in various communities nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century America?

**General Suggestions & Guidelines:**

In this paper I am looking for your own original thoughts and therefore you should not feel the need to do any research or reading beyond the assigned class texts. This paper asks you to move beyond the short weekly assignments you have been working on and provide a longer, more sustained, and in-depth analysis of a text or a group of texts.

A successful response paper will:

* Demonstrate your understanding of the assigned text(s)
* Have a clearly stated main argument/thesis which is supported throughout the body of the paper
* Show evidence of thoughtful and careful engagement with the text
* Point to specific “evidence” (quotes, details, stylistic devices, etc.) from the text to support your claims – what is known as “close reading”

**Length:** 6-8 pages

**MLA Formatting and Style**, including the following:

* Times New Roman font
* double-spaced
* 1” margins (the default left and right margins in Word are 1.25”, so you will have to set these)
* in-text parenthetical citations
* a list of Work(s) Cited

**Due Date:** Monday 11/25 *please upload your final paper to the Google drive folder for this assignment by 11:59 PM*