**Engl 103 A8, Spring 2018, Dr. Chowdhury**

**Final Essay with Research Assignment (30%)**

**Length**:

1500-1700 words, approx, excluding Works Cited, font 12 Times New Roman

**Citation and Formatting**: MLA Style

**Due Date for both first draft and final draft**: **June 15**.

Unlike the first essay assignment, we will not hold a mandatory editing session in class. You are still required to have your draft read and commented on by another student who is also enrolled in this class. You also have the option to bring your 1st draft to the Instructor’s office no later than the last week of classes to receive his feedback. Alternatively, you could have a consultant at the U of A Center from Writers read and comment on it. As the very last resort, you may edit your own first draft.

A substantial first draft (typed, printed out, and edited) must be turned in with the final draft of the essay.

The two drafts must establish continuity and progression in terms of both content and style. **Failure to submit a closely-related and relevant first draft that establishes such continuity and progression will result in a 5% deduction from the mark you will receive in the final draft.**

**Assignment and Audience Description**:

**The Assignment**: Write an essay based on any one of the following topics. The majority of your essay should be made up of your own interpretation of the literary text as well as your own arguments and examples supporting your thesis.

For some of these topics, you should devote at least two body paragraphs to discuss how the literary text represents the debatable issue and the rest of the essay to present your own arguments about the same issue as it relates to the 21st century.

**The Audience**: It would help if you imagine that you are writing this essay for the professor as well as your classmates who have also read the same literary text(s) that you are writing about. Although they have read the same text(s), they may have different takes on it/them—ranging from slightly different to very different—, and, therefore, they expect you to convince them that your reading is also valid and well-informed.

**Source Requirements**:

In addition to your own arguments and analysis of the literary text, **you are required to use** **at least four credible** sources to complement your own ideas. Examples of such credible sources are as follows: book chapters or journal articles about some aspect of the literary text, biographies of the authors, historians’ accounts and analyses of important historical events mentioned in the literary text, and, last but not least, current newspaper or magazine articles found through the databases and catalog available on the U of A Libraries homepage. The non-fiction films included in the course syllabus are also quite credible as sources.

Depending on which of the topics below you choose to research, you may have to use both literary criticism and historical/biographical sources, or you may find yourself using only one kind.

**Of the four minimum required sources**, **at least two** **must be scholarly or peer reviewed**. For the rest, you could use articles and opinion-pieces found in such well- known newspapers and magazines as *The New Yorker*, *The* *Globe and Mail*, *The New York Times*, *Newsweek*, *The Guardian, Time*, and so on. Even though the articles found in these well-regarded newspapers and magazines are not scholarly, they are written by authors with firmly established credibility.

**Sources not to use**: *Wikipedia*, Schmoop.com, tabloids or gossip newspapers such as *People*, *The National Enquirer*, and tweets by the U. S. President Donald Trump are not credible sources. Gossip magazines and Trump tweets may, however, be used as primary sources, for instance, to exemplify aspects of celebrity culture.

**The Essay Topics**:

1. How does Fitzgerald use his own experience as a “celebrity” writer in the 1920s America in his masterpiece *The Great Gatsby* to critique the culture of fame and celebrity? How has the Internet and Social Media in our time intensified the often unhealthy pressure of celebrity culture?
2. How does the short story entitled “Entrepreneur” by Angie Pelekidis hold up to scrutiny the pop-culture figure of the entrepreneur as hero? How do actual entrepreneurs such as Bill gates, Mark Zukerberg, and Elon Musk maintain and manipulate their public self-images to perpetuate the myth of the entrepreneur as cultural hero?
3. What significant similarities and differences do you notice when you compare and contrast the rites of passage the protagonists go through in “ Barn Burning” and “Boys and Girls,” respectively?
4. What important theme (themes) do the references to “Ode to a Nightingale” by John Keats found in *The Great Gatsby* help promote?
5. How does *The Great Gatsby* manage to portray a complex picture of gender roles and sexuality in early 20th-century America without challenging the social norms directly?
6. How does the short story entitled “Volar” by Judith Ortiz Cofer subtly suggest that media images can have a detrimental effect on the bodies and minds of young girls, especially those from recent-immigrant families trying to fit into the dominant culture? How relevant is Cofer’s critique of the impact of media images in this age of Internet and social media?
7. What important point about the American society and its values during the so-called Jazz Age and the Prohibition era does *The Great Gatsby* illustrate by depicting carefree partying and limitless drinking?
8. How do “On being Brought from Africa to America” by Phyllis Wheatley and Robert Hayden’s “A Letter from Phyllis Wheatley” serve as fitting responses to each of their respective audiences and historical milieus?
9. What does the portrayal of sport of different kinds and the words and actions of various sportsmen and women tell you about the value of fair competition in the early twentieth- century American society portrayed in *The Great Gatsby?* In light of the on-going scandals involving elite athletes and sportsmen and women in our times, how relevant is Fitzgerald’s critique even today?
10. How does William Faulkner’s “Barn Burning” serve as a complex critique of the continuing social injustices in the post-Civil War American south?
11. How does Fitzgerald use different literary devices such as characterization, symbolism, and narration to expose the mendacity of the American Dream in the early twentieth-century? How does Fitzgerald’s critique still apply to the early 21st-century, especially in the Trump era?
12. How does “Cathedral” by Raymond Carver succeed in capturing the conflicted national mindset of the transitional era between the Vietnam War and the Watergate Scandal, on the one hand, and the Reagan era, on the other, without even introducing political issues explicitly?
13. How does *The Great Gatsby* portray consumerism and advertising? What message about the early 20th-century American society and its values do you glean from this portrayal? How do advertising and consumerism continue to influence people across the world in the early 21st century in the era of ubiquitous handheld electronic devices with internet connection?
14. How does the subtle protest against the Trans-Atlantic slavery found in “On Being Brought from Africa to America” by Phyllis Wheatley still resonate with the experience of “workers” around the world who live and work in slavery-like conditions as well as that of the victims of human trafficking in the 21st century?

1. What important point about the connection between organized crime and American society in the 1920s is being put forward in *The Great Gatsby* through such characters and their words and actions as Dan Cody, Meyer Wolfsheim, and last but not least, James Gatz, aka Jay Gatsby?