

Research Paper Guidelines

American Literature Honors (2016)

The purpose of this paper is to examine the ways in which the American way of life was changing in the early 20th Century, so that it will be possible to understand literature from the period as a reaction to those changes.

Paper requirements

- Question: What were some of the major changes in American society between the 1890s and 1925?
- Content: Your paper will discuss some of the major changes in American life that occurred during the first quarter of the Twentieth Century. Issues particularly relevant to course reading are listed below. During class, students will be able to select a particular issue of interest. You will not only write but also be asked to speak briefly about your topic.
- Issues:
- Women's role in society (marriage, family, sex, business, politics)
 - Advertising
 - Race relations
 - Social Darwinism (in general, the ways that Darwin's theory of natural selection and the survival of the fittest are applied to society; *eugenics* is one particular issue to look up in relation to this)
 - Sports (what is popular; amateur vs. professional sport as an issue; race, gender, and social class as issues related to sports and how they are played and who plays which sports)
 - Automobiles' effect on American life (as they go from new to common)
 - Popular music (jazz)
 - Religion
 - Alcohol / prohibition / organized crime (bootlegging; speak-easy)
 - Tycoons (J. P. Morgan, John D. Rockefeller)
 - Broadway (the theater)
 - World War I (the effect of the war on the U.S., not the fighting itself)
 - Urbanization (New York City as a particular focus—and waste management one issue worth examining)

See next page for guidelines

Guidelines

Length: The final paper should be approximately 700 words (content; doesn't include Works Cited page) typewritten, double-spaced, using Times New Roman 12-point font.

Form: The paper should follow the MLA style guidelines, including the use of in-text citations and a Works Cited page. Use the "MLA Guide (Purdue University)" site on the Gulliver Library page as a resource for questions about format (or check with me). I will spend some time discussing this in class.

Sources: You need to use a minimum of four sources. These sources need to be reasonably balanced (i.e., a single source cannot predominate). *Wikipedia cannot* be used as a source—find print sources with identifiable authors (using the Gulliver Library databases is a good way to do this).

Grading: The grade will be based on the following factors: 1) the selection of meaningful details; 2) originality of organization and expression, rather than using the sources' organization and expression; 3) effective mixing of sources, so that there is a sense of balance rather than one or two sources dominating—even at the paragraph level, mixing sources is better than using a single source; 4) sound mechanics, including appropriate transitions, clear concise expression, and accurate punctuation and spelling; 5) careful following of MLA guidelines when quoting, paraphrasing, summarizing, and citing.

Plagiarism: The paper must present *your* own ideas and writing. Using other people's ideas or words without citation is plagiarism which will result in a zero for the paper (in addition to whatever penalties the administration assigns for a GPAHC violation).

Due: Tuesday, February 9, at the beginning of class.