

Prospectus and Annotated Bibliography Assignment (ESSAY 1)

The Pursuit of Happiness and the American Dream

For the purposes of this class, we will be focusing on the pursuit of happiness, exploring myriad conceptions of happiness, contemplating how it is obtained, and considering whether it exists at all. Independently, you will be researching and writing argumentative essays about happiness, specifically through the narrower lens of the American Dream. This semester, you will choose **one** facet of the American Dream, e.g. home ownership, and relate it to the pursuit of happiness. So, for example, as your focus for the semester, you could choose to write about home ownership as it applies to African-Americans, looking at how this part of the A.D. relates (or does not relate) to the experience of African-Americans. How you choose to narrow your topic is up to you, though you will need to get your topic pre-approved with me on September 6th (more on that later).

For your first assignment, you will be required to independently research and develop a writing plan for all three of the essays you will write this semester. After carefully reading the Assignment Sheets for all four assignments, you will compile an Annotated Bibliography. This means you will need to draft a MLA-compliant Works Cited page and annotate each entry (i.e. type notes regarding both summary [main arguments] as well as evaluate the reliability of the Source, if necessary). After considering and reflecting on the information you have gleaned from researching, you will write a Prospectus (essentially, a roadmap for all of your research and essays), detailing potential thesis statements (which ought to be interesting and original), and discussing what types of sources you will use to support your argument, as well as noting any potential issues you anticipate. Relevant information pertaining to writing a Prospectus or creating an Annotated Bibliography may be found on pages 215-221 in the *Composition and Rhetoric Guide*.

Remember that the goal of academic writing is to make an original argument, to bring a fresh and logical perspective to the issue you are exploring. It is insufficient to merely present the arguments of another, even if that person is an expert. Leave that job for the biographers and textbook writers! Sources should be relegated to supporting roles, so as to bolster your own argument.

Annotated Bibliography Source Requirements

At least 10 sources, comprised of the following:

- 3 scholarly secondary sources (USE JSTOR)
- 1 other reliable secondary source (reliable but not necessarily scholarly)

- 3 primary sources (at least two of these should be specified as nonfiction)
- 3 sources of your choosing: they can be a video or other visual primary source (e.g. television episode; film; advertisement, painting, etc.) or an audio primary source (e.g. radio broadcast; podcast), or something else.

Deadlines:

On **Thursday, September 6th**, I will be meeting with you individually to discuss the prospectus. By this time, you should know the subtopic that you would like to focus on. Please come with any questions you may have about how to write the prospectus or annotated bibliography.

Final deadline: Thursday September 13th by class-time, not a minute later. You must submit all of your sources along with your final essay **on Moodle**. Paper submissions **will not** be accepted.