**Argument/Research Topic: Is the American Dream Alive or Dead?**

Whether or not the American Dream is still alive is a subject of much debate and controversy; it is even an issue that has come up repeatedly among our current presidential candidates. Your task is to explore the topic of the American Dream—through research and even some of the texts we have read in class—and arrive at a conclusion as to whether or not the American Dream is still alive in 2017.

In order to form your opinion/argument about the American Dream, you need to look at the history of the American Dream (this might be where some of the texts we have read for this class might come in) as well as the current status of the American Dream by researching current credible sources, including articles, non-text-based sources (see below), and the opinions of others.

A good place to start is by watching this recent PBS program that debates whether the American Dream is alive or dead. (You can use the link below this sentence). This source may not be used in your paper.

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/point-taken/american-dream-dead-alive/#watch>

Here are some links to a few articles that might help you get started as well (links also available on my website): These sources may not be used in your paper.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2014/06/05/is-the-american-dream-dead/>

<http://www.cnbc.com/2015/12/24/millennials-are-wrong-about-the-american-dream-commentary.html>

<http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2015/01/01/is-the-modern-american-dream-attainable/the-american-dream-is-alive>

**SOURCES**

You will need to use 8-10 sources in your paper, and they need to include different *types* of sources.

* **At least three text-based “news” or “history” sources:** These can be news articles found online or in print, history sources (such as textbooks, books you find in the library or elsewhere, etc.). *You may use one of the articles listed above if you wish; however, there are plenty of articles out there about the current state of the American Dream*.
* **At least three “literature” sources:** You need to discuss at least three texts we have read over the course of the year in terms of what they each suggest about The American Dream. These can be novels, plays, poems, short stories, etc.
* **At least two “non-text-based” sources:** These can be interviews that you conduct with other people you know (if you go this route, you should choose a “good” source, someone with an interesting story—we will talk about this in class), podcasts, TV programs, critically acclaimed movies or documentaries, political cartoons, etc.

**SO, WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS ASSIGNMENT? WHAT IS THE GOAL?**

After researching this topic and considering all the information from your sources, your job is to form an argument in which you state your opinion on whether you think the American Dream is alive or dead. Then, you need to support your argument with your own discussion and your findings from your research. You should also address the counterargument at some point in your essay (you might want to consider that when looking for your sources).

**THE FINE PRINT (a.k.a. “Other Important Details”)**

* **Your paper needs to be in MLA format, with 1-inch margins, double spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font. You will need a Works Cited page, and you will need to use proper citation for your sources within your paper. Your paper must also be between 750 and 1200 words. This word count does not include your MLA headings or your works cited page.**
* You will be uploading this paper to Turn It In.
* You will be turning in assignments such as source sheets/index cards by certain due dates (see below) to ensure that you are finding good sources AND that you are not procrastinating with your research.
* It is highly suggested that you save this paper as a Google Doc so that you can access it both from home and school.

**POSSIBLE ORGANIZATION OF PAPER**

**(Note: There is more than one way to organize this paper; this is just a suggestion in case you need help getting started.)**

I. Introduction (1 paragraph): Provide an overview of the American Dream (maybe when the concept originated, or perhaps what most people consider to be “The American Dream”). You could possibly use a source here. You should also introduce the controversy surrounding the American Dream—why is there a debate over whether it is alive or dead? *Your introduction should end with a thesis statement that argues what YOU think about the American Dream, along with an indication of WHY you believe this about the American Dream*.

II. American Literature (1-2 paragraphs): What does the literature that we have read suggest about the American Dream? You should include a quote each from at least three texts that we have read to illustrate your point. You should also discuss plot/character situations that illustrate the message each text sends about the American Dream.

III. Support for Your Opinion (2-3 paragraphs): What information have you found that supports your argument that you express in your thesis? What facts, figures, professional opinions, opinions from those around you, and perhaps even your own observations support your viewpoint? Make sure that instead of just listing fact after fact, you comment on and explain the information that you have found as it relates to your argument.

IV. Counterargument (1 paragraph): What does the other side suggest, and why? Again, this is where you should use some source information to help develop your point. Even more importantly, how do you address those counterarguments? Do you have some information that can help negate or dispute the point that “the other side” has made?

V. Conclusion (1 paragraph): Emphasize your main points; end with a strong statement that provides closure and reinstates your viewpoint.

Teacher: Mr. Brandon Barton

Dates: April 10th to April 28th, 2017

Course: English 3, American Literature

Unit: The American Dream Research Paper

Materials: 4 x 6 index cards; folder w/pockets; pens/pencils

**Unit Outline:**

April 10 Introduction to Research Paper Unit Classroom

11 Research; Bibliography cards & note cards Media Center

12 Research; Bibliography cards & note cards Media Center

13 Research; Bibliography cards & note cardsClassroom

14 Research; Bibliography cards & note cards Media Center

April 17 BENCHMARK; Research; Notecards and Thesis Classroom

18 REVIEW; Research; Notecards and Thesis Media Center

19 Research Classroom

20 Research; **Bibliography cards** **DUE (min 8)** Media Center

21 Type Paper, Research Media Center

April 24 **Notecards (20) & Thesis DUE** Classroom

25 **Works Cited Page DUE** Media Center

26 Peer Edit; Type Paper Media Center

27 Peer Edit; Type Paper Media Center

28 **FINAL DRAFT DUE (3:00 pm)** Media Center

**Final draft due on Friday, April 28th by 3:00 pm.**

**(NO EXCEPTIONS!)**

**Must be turned in to turnitin.com!!!**

NOTE: Writing a research paper is a requirement of this course. This research paper is worth 100 points and fits in the Major Essay category. The majority of the work will be done in class, but you are still held accountable for the due dates. I suggest using a flash drive and/or Google Docs while also working on this paper at home as well. **You must have a minimum of EIGHT sources for this paper. All requirements noted above in bold will be counted as daily/quiz grades and must be turned in.**

\*\*This unit outline is subject to change if the teacher deems necessary;

however, you will be notified of any changes and be expected to make note

of changes.\*\*

**All other materials (the bolded parts and their due dates) will be checked off on due dates. Each is worth 25 points and will be counted in the Daily Work category.**