

American Narratives:

All papers: double-spaced with 1” margins on all sides, 12 point font, **numbered** pages. There must be an informative title, but only the research paper will have a separate title page.

In the upper right-hand corner of the **last page, on the back**, put the following:

Your name
American Narratives
Paper (identify as 1, 2, or research)

First Short Paper: due **February 19**: 5 pages
The American Dream in *The Professor's House*
This paper will involve no outside sources.

Second Short Paper: due **April 1**: 5 pages
The American Dream in *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, or in *White Noise*
This paper will involve no outside sources.

The Research Paper:

Since the American Dream and its discontents will be our focus in this seminar, you should be thinking of a research topic that grows out of one or more of our course texts and uses this theme. The paper itself will be due at the end of the semester, but I will want a thesis statement, list of primary sources, and 5 secondary sources on **March 25**.

Here are some ideas:

The American Dream as a topic idea can be taken in a number of different directions: economic success, religious or political freedom, equal rights, personal happiness, etc. You can contextualize any of our course readings or films according to what interests you. *On the Road*, for example, could be the primary text for a research paper on the Beat movement. You could contextualize *The Known World* by consulting historical works on antebellum Virginia, or *The Searchers* by placing it within the film genre of the western, the history of Indian captivity, or Indian Hater fiction. Gender issues emerge in *Mildred Pierce*, so you might consider the film in relation to the reality of women's lives in the 1940s or 50s. In each case a specific formulation of the American Dream is at work and can be critiqued: what is the American Dream in the particular text you're writing about and is it achieved or not (or partially achieved)?

The final paper will be 15 pages of text and a bibliography; notes as necessary.