The ways we’ve come to understand and appreciate 20th and 21st century American literature is through the diverse cultures, the political forces, and the artistic influences that made the literature possible. **Choose one or a few modernist writers and one or a few post-modernist writers to present.** Choose writers that you’re drawn to, that allow you to illustrate these diverse forces. Finally, and most importantly, please draw connections (whether you’re comparing or contrasting) between the stylistic techniques and the content of the modernists and the postmodernists that you choose.

You must make **clear connections** between the style and technique of the modernists as well as the postmodernists. The way to do this well is to clearly identify the points of comparison in their works (style and content) as well as points of comparison in the forces (political, social, cultural) that influence the works.

**Format:** Required scope: 1500 – 2000 words (please give word-count in header) single-spaced. Write your essay responses on a word processor, single spacing, and using 12 point font. In your header (top left), please include your name, your class, word-count, and the date you turn your essay in. Please also create a title for your work.

As you develop your response, **you must give evidence from the text (specific examples, quotes, or a paraphrase/summary of a passage) to support your thesis.** It is the support, the evidence, that you cite that indicates the thoughtfulness of your critical reading. Any research outside our text should be critically evaluated and vigilantly documented.

**Some Hints as you proceed**

- It’s a good idea to sketch out a plan (a working thesis and tentative outline) and talk with me as you proceed with your essay project. Better yet, why not compose a rough draft and turn it in during week seven? That will give me a chance to read and respond and will give you a chance to revise before the final due date.

- Visit the Writing Center early in the project.

- Go back to the questions on the weekly writings to help guide and develop your discussion.

- You don’t need to do any research outside of our text (although you certainly may – but if you do be certain to 1) evaluate your sources [no Wikipedia!] and 2) accurately and clearly incorporate your sources (i.e. paraphrasing, summarizing, quoting) and 3) document your sources with in-text citations and a Works Cited page.
ASSESSMENT GUIDE

CONTENT: Interpretation is focused and developed by course themes, illustrates an excellent understanding of the literature, and represents not only a thoughtful engagement of the material but an originality of approach.

ORGANIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT: Writing asserts interpretation in a clear thesis statement, develops this thesis well with details, specific examples, and quotations from the literature. Writing uses secondary sources occasionally to support interpretations.

CLARITY/QUALITY OF WRITING: Writing is clear, effective, and demonstrates standard grammar conventions and MLA format.

Please have fun with this project, enjoy the grand view as you develop your ideas, use specifics and quotes from the text in your writings, and take the stance that you are now the expert on reading and writing about American Literature in the 20th century.

Write an essay that only you (the best of you) could write.