**Essay 3: American Renaissance/Romantic Period Instructions**

Choose **ONE** of the following topics and write a polished essay of at least 1,200 words (4-5 double spaced typed pages). The essay requires not less than 3 secondary sources. Before writing your essay, reread your notes and assigned textbook reading(s) just to refresh your memory. Also, it might be useful to reread a composition textbook to remind yourself of the guidelines on how to write a clearly-defined thesis statement, well-developed paragraph(s), and an essay using the MLA or APA or Turabian parenthetical method of documentation for your quotations and any secondary sources you cite. To let your instructor know which style of documentation you are using, write MLA, APA, or Turabian in the title of your essay as follows: **Title – Citation style** (e.g., “Christians and the Study of American Literature – APA”).

**NOTE:** To receive an excellent grade, a student must demonstrate a reasonable competence in organizing an essay on a set topic; developing ideas logically and systematically; supporting these ideas with the necessary evidence, quotations or examples; organizing a paragraph; documenting essays (using MLA, APA, or Turabian) style; spelling the commoner words of the English language correctly; punctuating correctly; and writing grammatical sentences, avoiding such common mistakes as comma splices, run-on sentences, sentence fragments, faulty agreements, faulty references, shifts in person, number, or tense.

1. **Choose any ONE** of the works/authors of the American Renaissance or Romantic Period studied in this course and write a literary analysis of the chosen work. The focus of the essay should be three-fold: to discuss the theme of the author/work, the major characteristics of the period that are evident in the work, and major narrative devices the author uses to communicate his or her message. Your essay must have a clearly-defined thesis statement, well-developed paragraph(s), and fitting conclusion.
2. Discuss Washington Irving's “Rip Van Winkle” as an allegory - that is, as a self-sufficient narrative that nevertheless signifies more than what is said. You may choose to focus on the entire narrative, or on brief sections or episodes that you consider allegorical.
3. Compare and/or contrast the way in which Washington Irving, Cullen Bryant, and David Thoreau used nature in their writing.
4. Choose **ONE OR TWO** poems by **ONE** of the following poets: Edgar Allan Poe, William Cullen Bryant, or Phillis Wheatley. (The poem **MUST** be one of the assigned readings in your textbook). Analyze the poem(s) thoroughly, considering aspects such as theme(s), verse form(s), political, cultural, social, economic, religious, literary, and historical background, and the thematic significance of important figures of speech. Remember to choose an appropriate title and in your introduction an opening sentence and a clear thesis statement that will attract the reader. After your discussion, be sure to "tie up" your essay with an appropriate conclusion.
5. Imagine that someone unfamiliar with American Literature has asked you to characterize the writing of the Age of Colonialism, Age of Reason/Revolutionary era, and American Renaissance/Age of Romanticism. Begin by writing a brief survey (including the major characteristics) of these periods of American Literature, indicating the major writers of each period. Select **ONE** writer from each period and write a thumbnail description of the themes and/or characteristics of each writer's work(s).
6. Choose one or two characters from either Nathaniel Hawthorne's “Young Goodman Brown” or Herman Melville’s “Bartleby the Scrivener” and discuss the ways in which each experiences conflict (either with self, other characters, or with the social and/or physical environment); the ways in which each attempts to deal with it, and the relative success or failure of each. Who receives your deepest sympathy? Why?