ESSAY #1 REQUIREMENTS

- Due Thursday, September 15 at the beginning of class
- At least 3 FULL, top-to-bottom pages (does not include works cited page)
- Standard MLA format
- Title, works cited page
- Typed, double-spaced, proper margins, 12-point font, Times New Roman
- Use specific quotations from the text with accompanying analysis
- Standard rules of paragraph construction (i.e. topic sentences, supporting quotations, appropriate transitions)
- Essay should be guided by an argumentative/analytical thesis statement

Step 1: Consider class discussions about the significant cultural texts we have examined as a class (e.g. The Beatles on The Ed Sullivan Show, Michael Jackson’s first televised moonwalk, music videos) and then identify a music-related text that you believe is equally representative or symbolic of a specific moment in America’s cultural history. This cultural artifact can be a song, a video, or a live performance of your choosing, but it must be singular in nature (e.g. not an album or full concert. This is your primary text, so make sure to include it on your works cited page.

Step 2: Once a cultural text has been selected, you should begin the drafting process by crafting a paragraph that explains the text’s impact. In this paragraph, work to succinctly describe the cultural text by providing background information about the text itself as well as its context. In other words, explain what was going on in America at the time the text was first introduced (don’t forget to cite your credible sources). Information from this paragraph will ultimately become a portion of the introductory paragraph.

Step 3: Begin constructing an argument that identifies the specific reason you think the text has attained its place in history. This reason should not be a list of stuff, but rather a larger, overarching claim that offers an explanation for HOW the text is representative of a moment in American culture or WHY the text has changed an aspect of American culture. Keep in mind that although you may not use first person when writing this essay, your explanation can, and most likely will be, your own personal opinion.

Step 4: Create a list of at least four ways that the text does whatever you have claimed in step 3. Next, construct a topic sentence about each item on your list. Use these topic sentences to craft an outline for each body paragraph.

Step 5: Construct an introductory paragraph that draws from information identified in Steps 1 and 2. Remember that a successful introduction not only provides background information, but also establishes and introduces all ideas important to the understanding of your thesis.

A few reminders:
- You will turn in a hard copy of the essay AND submit it to the CourseDen dropbox for plagiarism detection.
- DO NOT E-MAIL ESSAYS TO ME. I WILL NOT ACCEPT THEM.
- If there is an emergency in which an extension is needed, you must discuss it with me at least 24 hours in advance (via e-mail or face-to-face meeting) to work out when you will turn it in.
- Essays will be docked a letter grade each day they are late.
- I WILL NOT, UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES, ACCEPT ESSAYS ANY LATER THAN THREE DAYS AFTER THE ORIGINAL DUE DATE.