

English 299: Creative Assignment One

Due Tuesday, September 22, by the start of class.

This assignment does not have a page limit, but remember that your response will be graded in relation to all the others. Skimpier responses will receive lower grades. I would recommend at least two double-spaced pages. Do not single space.

Update Whitman in some particular way, not addressing *Leaves of Grass* as a whole, but a small, manageable part of the poem. In setting down your vision of today's United States, be sure to reference how he describes the America of his time in the 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass*. Go into detail about some aspect, or some few aspects, of the American experience, rather than try to cover everything. Avoid overgeneralizations. Concrete detail is crucial and catalogues are nice, but summary is undesirable.

Your task *is not* to write an essay about Whitman, but to respond to him with your own artistic expression. This could take the form of a letter to the poet, a poem, a prose-poem, a narrative, a dramatic exchange—really, anything but a straightforward critical essay.

You may be inspired to follow Allen Ginsberg. Or not. You may choose to parody Whitman, to praise him, or to offer some combination of the two. How you frame the response is altogether your decision.

