

# The Queer American Novel: Final Essay Assignment

## Short Research Essay

*If you want comments, this essay is due by Friday, December 11 by 10:00 a.m. For just a grade, it is due Monday, December 14 by 5:00 p.m. Either way, send it as a Microsoft Word email attachment. The body of the essay should reach approximately eight pages. A Works Cited page, or bibliography, is required.*

### **Assignment Description & Task:**

This assignment asks you to examine any one of the novels we've read, using at least three outside sources to support and develop your argument. The argument should center on sexual identity, erotic desire, and/or gender identity and expression. These issues may intersect with other important concerns, such as race, class, gender, nationality, disability, and religion.

Instead of attempting the global interpretation of an entire novel, it will probably work better to focus on some aspect of the novel that you can cover in-depth in eight pages. The assignment calls both for research and for close reading.

Your sources can be literary critical, theoretical, and/or historical. At least one needs to come from database, such as MLA, JSTOR, or Project Muse. Students who are less comfortable working with literary criticism are welcome to find sources that provide historical insight, perhaps sources shedding light on queer history as it relates to an issue the novel raises.

If you would like help in finding general sources that speak to queer studies or queer theory, please speak with me directly. I would also like to encourage you to meet with me, in my office, to discuss your research essay at any stage in the process and with any concerns you have about it.