Essay Requirements

You must double space and use Times New Roman, 12 point font.

Length: 1 ½ page minimum, 2 page maximum. This is an absolute requirement, not a target.

Your heading should resemble those in the examples.

Each essay is worth nearly 9% of your semester’s grade, with a total of 35% of your grade stemming from these short essays. If you are so inclined, you can turn in an “extra” essay at any of the due dates. In that case, at the end of the semester, I will average only your four best grades.

Here are the due dates:

#1:

Feb. 14: “Changing Woman,” Columbus, Cabeza de Vaca, Smith, or Bradford

#2:

Mar. 6: Bradstreet, Edwards, or Franklin

#3

Apr. 17: Paine, Emerson, Thoreau, or Douglass

#4:

May 8: Hawthorne, Poe, Whitman or Dickinson

I will mark and return the first three sets of essays. I will NOT return the May 8 essay. I will simply assign them a grade.

I will review up to two drafts that are EMAILED to my Midwestern address by noon, the day before the final essay is due. The review will entail my reading your draft and offering three suggestions as to how to improve your essay. I will NOT edit your essay. These drafts are optional, but certainly they are likely to help you improve the quality of your essays.

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Now to content:

I will provide questions that you need to address in these short papers. In choosing these questions, I am pointing you in a specific direction and providing you with a topic that I think you can cover in a two-page essay.

IMPORTANT: First of all, each essay should be a critical analysis. In other words, you need to have a thesis. AND YOU NEED TO GET THAT THESIS STATEMENT APPROVED BY ME BEFORE WRITING AND TURNING IN YOUR ESSAY. Don’t just give me a summary of the text. You need a position and support.

In order facilitate your thesis statements and reduce plagiarism, I will ask specific questions that should help generate your thesis statements. In other words, you answer to my question should result in an analytical, subjective perspective.

Your thesis statement should be clearly presented in your introduction, and then your paragraphs should focus on points of support. Quoting from the primary text is encouraged, but you don’t have to include a Works Cited section. (The primary text is the essay, story, or poem that the assigned author has written. It is not the introductory comments made by the editors.)

Remember, these essays focus on your ideas; **secondary sources are forbidden**. In other words, every single word, phrase, and thought must be your own. If you plagiarize and I catch you, you will earn a zero for all of that assignment—and you cannot replace that grade. In addition, I will report this violation of the Student Honor Code to my department head and the Dean of Students. If I catch you twice, you fail the class.

Finally, when writing, be clear. Although your essays should be thoughtful, clarity should also be foremost in your mind.

When in doubt, look at the examples that I posted.

When you are ready to submit your essay, upload it to D2L’s dropbox.