

Short Essay Prompts

For each essay you should discuss one of the assigned readings, and include one other piece of information you have discovered on your own (video, speech, blog, article). This is a synthesis, not a summary. You should do no more than a sentence of summary for each piece you discuss. Consider the readings in light of one another and our class discussion and come to a conclusion regarding their significance. Feel free to do some reflection in your writing and use the first person. You may make references to other works you have read or relevant experiences you have had. 500 words each. MLA format.

Essay One - Analyzing Rhetoric – Sep 8

Foer, “A Case for Eating Dogs” and Swift, “A Modest Proposal.”

What is the purpose of using satire to explore a problem?

Essay Two - Analyzing Class – Sep 20

Sanders “Commonwealth,” and Coontz, “Nation of Welfare.”

How has our contemporary understanding of class changed over the years? What is the American Dream, and how is it being re-written? What is the significance of the “invisibility” of class difference or of the lower/working class?

Essay Three - Analyzing Gender & Sexuality – Sep 27

Kimmel, “Bros Before Hos,” and Sullivan, “What is a Homosexual?”

How do social expectations differ for men and women? How do different social expectations for men and women influence the way we think about ourselves and our gender? How do gender differences overlap and differ from sexuality?

Essay Four - Analyzing Race – Sep 29

hooks “Commodified Blackness,” and McIntosh, “White Privilege.”

How does public perception of race affect the lives of people of color? Despite these effects, how/why do we erase race or not recognize the race of white people?

Essay Five - Analyzing Media – Oct 6

Bordo, “Never Just Pictures,” and Mathieu, “Rhetoric of Coffee.”

In what ways do we become complicit in perpetuating stereotypes or harmful expectations due to pressure from media? What is the relationship between for-profit media and individuality/group mentality?