Short Essay/Project 3

Western Canon 1 | Brendan Shea, PhD (Brendan.Shea@rtc.edu)

Here are the guidelines for the second essay project.

1. The questions are listed below. You should only answer **ONE** of them (not all of them!).
2. Each essay should be, in total, between **750** and **1250 words** (the visual art option below requires slightly less). I won't penalize you for going over, though you should think carefully about whether you *need* the extra words.
3. Direct quotes from the book or handouts can be **cited** simply as (page number or handout name). If you choose to use outside resources, please use a standard citation style (such as APA, MLA, or Chicago), and provide a full citation. In general, **no more than 15%** of your paper should be quotes.
4. Please don't use the words or ideas of others without proper attribution. Please see the syllabus for details on the policy regarding **plagiarism and academic integrity.** I regularly use www.turnitin.com to check for plagiarism or related issues.
5. Since the goal of the exam is to demonstrate how well *you* understand the material, you should try to **use your own words/examples**. Essays that simply reproduce the handouts will not receive good grades.
6. Please submit your exam as a SINGLE MS WORD file to the D2L assignment folder.

Essay Choices

1. **Religion Option.** Write an essay in response to the prompt: "What is the relationship between religion and art in the "West"?" Your essay should show your knowledge of the Torah, Gospels, and/or Qur'an, and should provide example of literature/art influenced by these.
2. **What Does it Mean to be "In Hell"?** Write an essay exploring the different ideas about "Hell" (who belongs there, what it amounts, etc.) in Dante, the Qur'an, or in other sources (for example, consider ideas about the sources of human unhappiness in lyric poetry).
3. **Lyric Poetry Option.** Write at least FIVE lyric poems or song lyrics (of at least 100 total lines). These poems should all *somehow* be based on class material. You MUST include at least the following poems:
    a. A poem based on the Qur'an OR on Rumi (from "Lyric Poetry").
    b. A poem that is an imitation of either Sappho or Horace.
    c. A poem based on Dante's Inferno.
    d. A poem based on Chaucer's "Wife of Bath."
    e. **At the end of each poem, write a 50-100 word explanation of how class material shaped your poem.**
4. **Philosophy option.** Write a modern explanation and defense of "natural law theory" based on course notes (see C3_NaturalLawTheory). Use examples from relevant class material (especially from the Qur'an, Dante, or Chaucer, all of which should be great resources).
5. **Visual Art Option: A New Circle of Hell.** Using your "New Circle of Hell" activity as a basis, produce a new piece of visual art based on this. The written portion of your assignment should be at least 500 words (though this can include what you've written as part of the earlier activity).
6. **A Lost Work.** Which "lost" work of classical literature or art do you think would be most "important" to find? (Ideas: Sappho's collected poems, Aristotle's lost dialogues, Euripides' collected plays, Ovid's *Medea,* lost works related Judaism/Islam/Christianity). Now do the following:
    a. Describe when this work was lost, and what evidence we have for it actually existing. (In many cases, other authors make references to works that we no longer have).
    b. Say a bit about why you think it would be valuable to recover.
    c. Finally, speculate a bit! Tell me what *you* think might be in this missing work.
7. **A Pilgrimage.** Write a short story (based on Chaucer's Canterbury Tales) in which 3 to 5 characters we've met over the course of the semester go on a road trip together. Your story should somehow communicate to me that you know about who these characters are, and on how they might respond to various situations.

Short Essay Grading Rubric

Each essay is worth 10 points. Your grade will depend on how well you do each of the following:

1. **To what extent does your submission demonstrate knowledge of relevant course material (5 points)?**

1	There are few meaningful references to course material.
2	There are some brief references to course material, but they are superficial, and don't show in-depth knowledge of the content.
3-4	The submission engages with course material, and shows some knowledge. However, at least SOME significant and relevant details are either omitted or are described inaccurately.
5	The submission shows in-depth knowledge of the relevant course material.

2. **To what extent does your essay/project offer a complete, coherent, and creative response to the prompt (5 points)?**

1	The submission does not answer/respond to the question in a meaningful way. (Projects that very short/off-topic may receive this grade).
2	The submission does not fully meet the minimal requirements of the question. (For example, falling below the word count, or not responding to certain parts of the prompt).
3-4	The submission meets the minimal requirements. However, the response lacks clarity, completeness, or creativity in comparison to a "5". In argumentative essay, there are some gaps in the argument. In a creative project, more details may be needed, or some details/components don't cohere well with the whole.
5	The submission exceeds the minimal requirements, and offers a complete, coherent, and creative response to the prompt.