

TOPICAL ESSAY INSTRUCTIONS

For the units identified in your course syllabus, you must submit a topical essay responding to the indicated prompts. You must also evaluate each of your classmates' essays.

Grades and markup for topical essays will be available within 7 days from the due date of the corresponding classmate evaluations.

ESSAYS

The essay must be [3500–4500 words](#) (about 10–15 pages). Each essay must be submitted via its respective Canvas discussion board before the live seminar meeting in which you will present it. It must include at least 9 sources in its bibliography. Citation of your (or your classmates') unpublished work will not count toward the essay's required minimum number of sources. I will grade the essay according to [this rubric](#).

Direct quotations should be brief and focused. In using your sources, please also remember that you are *not* being asked to summarize your sources, nor should you try to create your essay by doing so. Minor quantities of summarizing may be appropriate to set the context of a given scholar's line of thought. But the vast majority of your essay should be taken up with your developing *your own argument* and using the sources you select (whether by way of affirmation or contrast) to help develop your case for your own thesis in your essay.

Your essays should seek meaningfully to contribute to contemporary, scholarly discussion of its topic. I would advise you to draft your essays sufficiently far in advance to allow you to take advantage of TutorMe's review services before submitting and presenting the final product, but you are not required to do so.

You may receive substantial feedback on the substance of your essay within a live meeting discussion. When you receive your essay rubric and markup after the live seminar meeting where we discuss it, you may see few or no further written comments on the "argument" and "bibliographic interaction" categories. In such cases, an essay's written markup comments may focus on identifying formatting, mechanical, or stylistic elements that bear adjustment and that would be too cumbersome to address during our live seminar meetings themselves.

For students in a PhD section, submissions earning an excellent mark ("A") will, in my sole judgment, be of publishable or publishable quality for an appropriate, peer-reviewed academic journal, conference session, or similar context. Consequently, these submissions should seek meaningfully to contribute to contemporary, scholarly discussion of its topic.

EVALUATIONS

You must submit an evaluation of each classmate's topical essay that was submitted in Canvas before the time it was presented during the live seminar. Your evaluation for each essay is due by the end of the first Monday following the live seminar in which the essay was presented. For the purposes of this exercise, all other students enrolled in all other cross-listed sections are your classmates (thus, PhD classmates include MA students and vice versa).

Evaluations completed on time will earn your own topical essays the right to count in full toward your overall course grade. Late or missing essay evaluations will result in the corresponding treatment of your topical essay (e.g., being one missing evaluation results in one zero on a topical essay, being one day late on an evaluation will result in a 5% reduction of one topical essay's grade). Spurious or excessively cursory evaluations may also result in reductions to the topical essays' grades.