

CORE106-10 Fall 2015

November 20, 2015

Prompt and Instructions for Paper #4

Prompt:

The theme of self-control and self mastery are important to the story in *Gilead* and the philosophy of *The Wisdom of Insecurity*. Is control of our destinies an illusion? How much power do we have to improve our prospects for happiness?

Write an argumentative essay taking either side of the following proposition:

Our fate is predestined, which means we cannot change the observable outcomes of our lives.

Notice the focus on “observable outcomes.” Define this term in a way that makes sense to you, but be clear to differentiate between observable outcomes versus other ways that happiness might be revealed or demonstrated. Use characters and plot from *Gilead* and the philosophical arguments in *The Wisdom of Insecurity* to support your observations. You may also add insights from Wallace’s Kenyon Commencement Address and *The Graduate*. Use White and Bakewell for inspiration about writing style and powers of observation.

Additional instructions:

1. You must include page numbers on the bottom right corner of your paper. Your overall grade will drop by 1/3 if you don’t include page numbers in the right corner.
2. Your paper should have:
 - a. 1-inch margins on the left and right, and top and bottom.
 - b. The text on page 1 should begin two-inches from the top.
 - c. Use 12-point Times Roman or Times New Roman font. You can use bold and italic versions of this font at your discretion.
 - d. Text other than the header should be doubled spaced, and paragraphs should be indented ½ inch.
 - e. Identify your paper in the upper left corner of page 1 with the following information, single-spaced.
 - i. Your Student ID. For this round, do NOT put your name on the paper.
 - ii. The date.
 - iii. The following text: “CORE 106-10 Fall 2015: Essay #4”
3. Do not give a title to the paper.
4. Citations: Use the MLA style described in the Writers FAQ. Note that you ordinarily cite with this format: (author page). See p. 183 for details.
5. Bibliography: Use the example on p. 215 of the Writers FAQ. The bibliography should appear on a separate page, with a “Works Cited” heading, as shown. You must include a

bibliography even though you will only list two or three sources.

6. The target length for your paper is five pages, and it must not exceed six pages.
7. **A first draft of the paper is due by class time on Friday, December 4. You must bring a hardcopy of the paper. Either single sided or double sided is fine. A final draft is due on Moodle by Tuesday, December 15 at 8:30 am, the time of the start of the final exam.**

Failure to submit a first draft will result in losing 2/3 of a grade. Late final drafts will lose 2/3 of a grade for each day, and papers will not be accepted for any reason later than November 15. “2/3” of a grade means, for example, a “B” drops to a “C+”, or a “C+” drops to a “C-.” The penalty is repeated for additional days. A late paper isn’t fatal, but you have a very strong interest in submitting your paper on time.

Notes:

A successful paper will have these ingredients:

1. The paper will address the prompt. In this case, identifying three passages or episodes will help structure the assignment and give you some sense of the scope of each description.

At the same time, do not list your examples in bullet point fashion. Transition between them and, to the best of your ability, synthesize them.

2. It will support your observations with examples from the readings. Use this paper as a way to demonstrate your engagement with the text.
3. The paper will establish a logical explanation that connects the evidence to your observations about the text. The word sometimes used to describe this property is *analysis*. Another phrase we might use is, “break it down”.
4. The composition of the paper will have transparency, precision, and style. Good composition will deliver your thesis into the mind of the reader with the strength and fidelity it deserves.

Good composition depends on structure and the construction of your sentences. But remember these things are a means to an end. The purpose of good construction is to enter the minds of your readers, and lift their understanding to a place that is close to your own.

5. For this round and the next, you will prepare a draft. Each of you will review the draft of an anonymously chosen fellow student. Instructions for the review will follow.

Bring your hardcopy of the first draft to class on December 4.

Restated, random observations from the earlier rounds of papers:

Grading Rubric

As you may have noticed, I use three criteria described above as the basis for your grade:

- 1) **Composition.** This includes an assessment of the quality of the construction and organization of your paper, as described above, and also includes an assessment of your adherence to the basic structural rules. If you forget to add page numbers, for example, it will be reflected here.
- 2) **Content.** This captures the quality and completeness of the content used from the readings to support your statements and observations. Generally, an important statement about the readings should be supported by some reference to the text or some example pulled from it. These descriptions and examples should be concise and carefully chosen.
- 3) **Analysis.** This includes the reasoning and the persuasiveness of the observations or claims in the paper. Do the statements in the paper follow logically from the premises and evidence provided? Are they plausible on the surface? Do they reflect originality and critical thought?

In each case:

- A: An exceptional demonstration of the stated goals. The paper could serve as a model for that attribute.
- B: A strong demonstration of the stated goals, with important opportunities for improvement.
- C: A minimally acceptable demonstration of the stated goals, with multiple and necessary opportunities for improvement.
- D: An unacceptable demonstration of the stated goals, but still reflects a minimal, good faith attempt to complete the work.
- F: Failure to demonstrate the stated goals, without evidence of a good faith attempt to address them.

If you do not bring a draft to class on the 6th, or send me an email with the draft before then, you will lose 2/3 of a grade on the paper.