English 103

Essay Assignment

Civilization began with writing. The first city also produced the first work of literature. For centuries, to be “educated” meant “well read.”

The world is currently undergoing a major transformation in this respect. Novelist and professor Will Self has argued: “The serious novel will soon be an art form on a par with oil painting or classical music: a subject for historical scholarship rather than public discussion.”

There are many indications that literature no longer plays a significant role in global society. The reading of novels, plays, poems is being replaced by visual modes of story-telling: movies, advertisements, graphic novels, and computer games.

Assume that in the near future reading works like the *Epic of Gilgamesh, Symposium, King Lear, Siddhartha*, etc. is something only a tiny fraction of people do. What impacts might this change from written to visual forms of storytelling have on society?

How might it change (or not change) such areas as: Human Relations, Identity, Creativity, Self-Expression, Religion, Education, Politics, Maturation, Cultural History and Heritage, etc.

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**Assignment:**

**Write a 1000 word essay explaining what you see as possible effects in 3 to 4 areas of experience. Do NOT write an introduction or conclusion.**

Limit each paragraph to one area of experience. You may subdivide areas listed above. You may consider areas not listed above. Tie your discussion to specific examples: examples based on the books we have read, and on your own personal experience. Avoid wordiness, repetition, and vague generalities.

You may conduct research relating to the topic, but this is not required. If you draw on researched materials, put quoted passages in quote marks, and cite all sources using MLA format (in-text citations and Works Cited page) to avoid plagiarism.

**DUE**: December 6, start of class. (Late essays will be lowered 5 points per day late.)