

## PAPER 2 PROMPT:

### THE MOST IMPORTANT DECADE OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

*Due by the beginning of class on Tuesday, 24 November 2015  
(4-6 typed pages, 1" margins, 12-pt. Times New Roman, double-spaced)*

*Paper should be submitted in both **HARD** and **ELECTRONIC** copies via Canvas  
Please use .doc or .docx format (I cannot read .odx or .pages files)*

For your second paper, you will consider the impact of the ten decades of the twentieth century (1900-1999) on the world we live in today.

More specifically, I would like you to discuss:

- Which decade of the twentieth century played the most important role in shaping the world we live in today. (**Note:** I will look favorably upon students whose essays do NOT focus on the 1960s.)
- Whether the impact of the decade that you discussed in the point above was a positive or negative one.
- Whether or not you would have liked to live in the decade you have discussed in the previous points. (**Note:** Please be honest with yourself and with the materials we've discussed in class! Just because an era is exciting to study, doesn't mean that it was a pleasant period to live through.)

Each of these topics should be the subject of at least one paragraph! Your response to each point of the prompt should address WHY you think and feel the way you do! And your position on each of these points should be clearly and concisely reflected in both your introductory AND concluding paragraphs.

In addressing these three points, you should be careful to:

- Clearly state what you believe are the defining characteristics of the decade you've chosen (*i.e. what is the big story of this decade, and what sets it apart from other decades?*).
- Clearly state what you believe are the defining characteristics of the present era (*Remember: you're being asked to link the past and the present – which means making sense, not only of the twentieth-century decade that you've chosen to discuss, but of our own world as well!*).
- Demonstrate mastery of the ideas and concepts described in class lectures and readings.
- Support your argument with appropriate references to significant historical events, people, documents, trends, and ideas. Whenever possible, explicitly reference course readings using simple parenthetical citations, e.g. (Reagan, "A Time for Choosing") or (Malcolm X, "The Ballot or the Bullet"). You may also reference my lectures or *The American Yawp*. Lecture notes should be cited as follows (Trainor, lecture notes, 22 Oct. 2015); *The American Yawp* should be cited in this fashion (TAY, "The New Woman").

Stylistically, a successful essay will:

- have a title that addresses / summarizes the argument and themes of the paper;
- have **a strong, incisive, and well-defined thesis**;
- have a graceful, well-crafted introduction and conclusion;
- **have strong paragraph topic sentences that summarize the content of the following paragraph, and demonstrate strong, clear links to the overall argument of the paper**;
- be effectively organized;
- show signs of close and careful proofreading.

**\*\*\* PLEASE NOTE \*\*\***

**For Paper 2, I WILL NOT take off points for grammar and spelling mistakes.**

Nevertheless, I'd still encourage you to adhere to the following tips for writing and organizing your papers effectively:

- Do not try to sound smart (i.e. write in an affected academic fashion). You *are* smart. And that will come across. Bloated vocabulary will only make you sound desperate (and more often than not, students who try to inflate their vocabulary end up using words incorrectly). You may even consider writing your essays by hand before typing them. I find that many students write more clearly and effectively when they trade in the keyboard-and-screen for pen-and-paper.
- Outline your argument first, then translate it into prose. This will help you figure out the structure of your essay before you have to worry about word choice, grammar, and spelling. Please do not dismiss this as a juvenile exercise! Many, if not most, pieces of professional writing begin with detailed outlines.
- Read your essay aloud to yourself. If and when you stumble over a sentence or phrase, rewrite it. Repeat this process until you stop stumbling.
- Most importantly, consider making use of Santa Fe's many writing-related resources. These include the Santa Fe Writing Lab:

[http://www.sfcollege.edu/academicfoundations/?section=learning\\_labs](http://www.sfcollege.edu/academicfoundations/?section=learning_labs)

You may also consider using the Paradigm Online Writing Assistant:

<http://www.powa.org/>

**Please aim to have a draft of your paper ready by Thurs., 19 November 2015 (note: this MAY require you to read ahead).** This will give you an opportunity to discuss your argument in class. I will also be happy to discuss the contents of your papers and read **polished** drafts **in office hours**.

Paper 2 will be worth 20% of the final grade. The grading scale is available on the course syllabus.