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HUM 3306: History of Ideas--The Age of Enlightenment to the Age of Anxiety
Summer 2012

ESSAY#1 INSTRUCTIONS: DUE BY MIDNIGHT (11:59PM) WENESDAY May 23rd

General instructions:

- The paper should be double-spaced, 1000 words long or longer (but not too much longer; quality, not quantity!).
- Follow the Blackboard internal "Dropbox" instructions for how to submit your paper within Blackboard (which then gets shuttled automatically to Turnitin; you don't need to register in Turnitin per se).
- Remember to verify that your paper has been correctly submitted. Excuses days later about problems will not be accepted. If you have a problem, you must notify me before the due date.
- Once the entire batch of essays are assessed, you will be able to go back into your paper--within the system--and see your score and feedback in bubble-comments. My colleague in the History Department, Dr. Jeremy Rowan, will be grading the papers; however, all matters about the papers should be directed to me, not him.
- You may draw upon information/perspectives gleaned from the "Prof" lectures and associated links, but the main ideas and particular approach should be yours. Do NOT use web sample papers, SparkNotes, etc. to get ideas or for phrasing. Do NOT do secondary research via the internet or elsewhere. Turnitin flags down papers that may have plagiarized phrasing or sections.
- Use whatever citation method for the primary text(s) that you have been taught in your Composition classes here at FIU or elsewhere. Or the one that you use in your own discipline/major. Be consistent in the method. For this first essay, there should be typically no other citations than for the primary text or author him/herself.
- Refer to the Checklist at the end of this file; you are expected to take care, to the best of your ability, to meet the criteria established on the Checklist. Note the grading scale.
- Do not provide a cover page; put your name/classname/date turned in/option#/your title at the top of the first page.
- Be prepared, should it be requested, to supply a draft stage of the essay (if you're

wondering; this helps discourage plagiarism!). This means you must remember to permanently save a draft at some point as you are composing.

--Organization, quality of analysis, and style will all be factors in determining your grade, worth 25% of the course grade. Be sure to make a computer-disk backup.

--Students sometimes ask what the “rubrics” are in respect to grading: go to the end of this file, and you will see a Revision Checklist. Those, in effect, are the rubrics for assessment, but it would be impractical and counter-productive to give you a break-down score in the four categories and subcategories: comments and overall feedback are, thus, “holistic.”

Choose one of the options below for the topic of your essay. These options are not intended to box you in, but to provoke insightful and original analysis. Do not just "answer" the questions below—they are intended to help you discern complexity, tensions, and even inconsistencies in our authors:

OPTION ONE: One might make the argument that the most key passage in Locke is section 50, near the end of Chapter V, in which he concludes his discussion of gold (money) and the obtainment of a "disproportionate and unequal possession of the earth." Read this passage very carefully. Do you agree that "men have agreed to a disproportionate and unequal possession of the earth" through "tacit and voluntary consent"? Or was this imposed upon most men by the strongest among them? Can "a man fairly possess more land" than he can use "without injury to anyone"? Does money (i.e. gold and silver) represent real wealth in goods and services? What is, or should be, the role of government in securing the right to and protection of "disproportionate" wealth? *To what extent is this, indeed, the key or core of Locke's Second Treatise?* This option invites, perhaps, critique of Locke or discussion of wider political-philosophical issues raised by or in the Second Treatise. (Remember: just don't answer the previous questions ... use them to brainstorm, not to organize your essay!!!)

OPTION TWO: A careful reading of Locke's notions about property development, spoilage, and so on, might lead you to conclude that he would be opposed to "excessive" capitalist development of real estate (i.e., say a Donald Trump tower on Miami-Dade wetlands), or perhaps the reverse. Explore to what extent you think Locke's ideas in The Second Treatise are significant for arguments for or against large-scale real-estate development. This option provides an occasion to apply Locke's ideas (especially in Chapter V) to the contemporary reality of land development that we see all around us in South Florida. Is development always "industrious and rational," as Locke seems to imply, or can it sometimes represent "the covetousness of the quarrelsome and the contentious"? (Section 34). Does development always serve the common good or does it sometimes, or often, serve only the wealthy? (As with Option One: do not answer these questions per se; they are offered as brainstorming cues.) *If you have some facts about Trump or South Florida real-estate from the internet, you may use them (in which case cite your source): this is an exception to the "no research" instructions above, and in general you should not be taking up much paper space with such.*

OPTION THREE: To what extent does Equiano's awareness of his lowly status as a slave impel him to turn to a European religion; adopt European (capitalist) business practices; and become an 'individual' in the European and/or Enlightenment sense of that term? Do you think Equiano abandoned his 'roots,' by participating enthusiastically in European wars, religion, and commerce (including the slave trade), etc? Did he 'sell out' to some extent? Obviously, Equiano is a complex character. He was an abolitionist but he also participated in the slave trade and advocated the colonization of Africa (at the end of his memoir). Try to explain some of the tensions or contradictions in his character, by looking both at his psychology and at some of the social forces at work in the Eighteenth Century or Enlightenment era. It's up to you to devise a main point about Equiano that gets at his complexity without being meandering! (Again: don't just answer the questions!)

Tips for analytical essay writing:

TITLE: Your title is the first chance to make an impression. A vague title (e.g., "John Locke's Ideas" or "Locke's Second Treatise") that could fit any other paper written on the same author or text gives a vague impression, indicating that the essay to follow likely lacks a focused main point.

AUDIENCE: Assume an audience much like your fellow students--familiar with the work, but unfamiliar with your particular approach, and therefore requiring specific examples (textual evidence, i.e., quotes) to understand, appreciate, and accept your analysis and argument. Avoid plot summary or tedious repetition of an author's points without higher level analysis, however. *It is very easy, especially with the Equiano topic, to end up just summarizing his life rather than analyzing the way he presents himself and the context within which he presents himself.*

IDEAS: Good ideas come not from your abstract memory of a text, but from your close reading and paying attention to details that might radiate out into larger patterns of meaning. I do not expect you to come up with something "new" from my perspective, but something "new" from your perspective. If you don't make a discovery in the process of drafting the paper, it probably will not be very satisfactory.

THESIS/DEVELOPMENT: Good essays unfold a major, focused idea or argument (your thesis) stage-by-stage, in a manner that will be compelling and convincing to the reader. This means that the old, boring high-school strategy of breaking down your basic idea into three (more or less disconnected) sub-points may not be the most suitable arrangement. Instead, for example, an essay (depending upon the thesis, of course) could in the first fourth highlight some intriguing contradiction or tension in a text (note that in the topic options # 1, #2, and #3 above I'm directing you to investigate complexity, perhaps even inconsistency, in Locke or Equiano); the next fourth might frame the tension in terms of a larger moral, literary, philosophical, religious, or historical debate or issue; and the last two fourths would illustrate the ramifications of the tension for the text you're exploring (tensions resolved? and if so, by what means? tensions not resolved? and if so, how does the

author/narrator cope with irresolution?). An essay can be thoughtful and well-organized, and yet still be confusing to the reader. Most often this occurs because the essay writer needs to provide clearer sign-posts to the overall argument. At crucial junctures (the topic sentence for a paragraph introducing a new stage of your argument), try to foreground analytical points rather than just something about character or the plot or the page-by-page sequence of a text's ideas.

There are two basic patterns of development:

Deductive: here, you state the thesis of your argument (your main point) directly up front (i.e., by the end of your introduction) and proceed to provide evidence for your main point. For example: you could make your main point "Equiano's obsession with status is not defensible" or "Equiano's obsession with status is justified." And then the subsequent paragraphs would present aspects of your position and your evidence for those aspects.

Dialectical/inductive: here you proceed to make successive more complex discoveries through a thesis--antithesis--synthesis pattern. For example: the first third of your paper would explore how "Equiano is obsessed with status"; the second third would explore "how Equiano is in fact filling in a void with status seeking"; and the last third would pull the two ideas together through a more complex observation, that "Equiano fills in his grief of being exiled from his native country by seeking to emulate the status values of European culture" (note how what seems to be a negative point about Equiano--that he is a sell out by seeking status--ends up to be a more complex positive point). Rhetorically, in your introduction you would still need to state your overall point as (for example) "Equiano fills in his grief..." or you might want, without being vague, to state the thesis as a problem that your paper in effect solves, but without giving the solution immediately: "Clearly, Equiano's eagerness to obtain status makes his character a vexing one if we assume he should remain consistently loyal to his native country or identity."

Here is another example from Locke. Say you had to write a paper on Locke's chapter on property/money, but were given broad latitude by your professor. Your ultimate thesis might be something like "Locke advocates equality politically, but in the process allows for inequality in wealth acquisition". Notice how the argument/stages of argument below get unfolded:

1--Locke begins with anti-hierarchy and a labor theory of value; nobody subordinated/everybody has an equal chance to obtain property.

2--But problem of irrational punishment etc. and spoiling/hoarding: so consent to gov't and money.

3--1 and 2 come together in your entrepreneurial freedom for a contract b/w employee/employer, based not on labor value but on "market" value (Locke implies, but does not directly make these points).

4--No longer a "fair" correspondence between labor and the fruits of one's labor results.

INTRODUCTIONS: Keep us focused on the text or author or main idea. Do not start off with weighty generalities about morality, the human condition, and so on. Avoid the "funnel"

opening paragraph if possible. If your introduction is more than a single paragraph (it might be two paragraphs if, for instance, you were setting up an author in terms of especially pertinent historical or cultural background), give an extra line space between the introduction and paper proper.

QUOTES: Depositing too many long quotes in a paper wastes space. Too few or no quotes, however, suggest inattention to the text or texts. You should probably have one or two longer, inset quotes, which you set up and analyze; the purpose here is to indicate that there are especially key or symptomatic passages that warrant lingering over because they are so revelatory. Quotes, besides helping to anchor/prove your points, often lead to analytical discoveries as you ponder/unpack them.

Grading scale (Turnitin will indicate your numeric—100-0—grade score; the grading scale is the traditional equivalents: A- = 90+; B- = 80+; and so on):

A = Focused, interesting main idea suggesting that you read, re-read, and probed around the text at hand. Prose is not merely correct: it is compelling and sophisticated. Organization makes sense given the topic and argument of the paper. The paper is of sufficient quality that it could be put online as a sample paper.

B = Main idea and development are clear, but the organization is weak in a section or two, or there are a few sentence or punctuation glitches that suggest careless editing.

C = Paper has a main idea, but not thought through by attending to the text or author actively. Organization falls apart at key moments. Sentence construction, although usually correct, is often imprecise or wordy. Nearly every page shows signs of careless editing.

D = The thesis is vague, and the organization is very chaotic. The paper indicates little insight about or basic understanding of the author/text. Or the prose/grammar suggests the need to go to the Writing Center.

F = The paper was not turned in. Such will receive (on a 0-100 scale) a “0”.

Use the checklist--“Rubrics”-- below to help you edit/revise your paper before you submit it:

Three tips for effective revising:

- Revise with “fresh eyes”: revise at least a day after you’ve completed a substantial draft.
- Use a printed copy and revise at a different locale than your computer.
- Revise in four “loops,” using the revision checklist below.

Yes	No	CONTENT
_____	_____	sharply focused: no extraneous material
_____	_____	complex aspects of issue thoughtfully examined

- _____ _____ judicious use of supporting specifics/quotes
- _____ _____ **ORGANIZATION & DEVELOPMENT**
- _____ _____ unified paragraphs, with clear topic sentences
- _____ _____ transitions between ideas and sections of essay
- _____ _____ essay unfolds stage-by-stage, no unnecessary "back-tracking" or repetition of sections
- _____ _____ **PROSE STYLE**
- _____ _____ straightforward and precise phrasing, without sentence fragments or run-ons
- _____ _____ few boring "is" verbs
- _____ _____ appropriate use of transition words
- _____ _____ varied sentence length and patterns
- _____ _____ **CORRECT GRAMMAR, ETC.**
- _____ _____ correct use of possessives and punctuation
- _____ _____ correct match between verbs and subjects
- _____ _____ no typos/misspellings