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HUM 3306: History of Ideas--The Age of Enlightenment to the Age of Anxiety
Summer 2009

FINAL EXAM: SYNTHESIS ESSAY

Please note: You will not get feedback because this exam is being submitted at the very end of the semester. You will get a grade for this assignment via Turnitin, but it will not appear until about the time you can check, via FIU Panthersoft, on your total course grade. If you have a question about your Final Exam grade or your course grade, get in touch with me early Fall 2009 semester. If there is some truly urgent and compelling reason to get in touch immediately after the due date of the Final Exam, please of course do so, however.

WHEN:

- The Synthesis Essay is due Saturday August 8 by midnight, via Turnitin.
- Turn it in single-spaced, with your name, etc., at a top corner; no cover pages, please.
- Be sure to indicate which question/option you are using.

WHO:

--You write it: no Wikipedia excerpts, no snippets from a website here, a website there. You! No outside sources are allowed; plagiarism will conclude in an "F" for the course.

--Do not string together paraphrases from the online lectures. Absorb but do not directly rely upon the online lectures; you will not succeed if you just mimic the lectures.

HOW:

--The essay should be between two and three pages SINGLE-SPACED. DO NOT PAD: that is a bad strategy. Especially do not have an opening paragraph that spins-its-tires in abstract profundity: "As long as humankind has endured, the ages have been witness to...". Get to the point, so your orientation/focus is immediately known: "As we move from non-technological society to highly technological, job-specialized society, it is no surprise that xxxxx has been xxxx. Great thinkers such as aaa, bbb, ccc, and ddd help us see that xxxx."

--You should have several brief quotes from our texts to show that your ideas are anchored in specific texts (showing me that you've read them!), not just a product of your generalized memory of the course's texts. Do not, however, use up too much space quoting.

--Effective organization, a decent style and clean grammar/punctuation, and lots and lots

of thoughtfulness are expected.

--About organization: generally speaking, it is best to discuss each author/text in turn (for example, 1st 5th devoted to Locke, 2nd 5th devoted to Equiano, 3rd 5th devoted to Wordsworth, etc.), with comparative loop-backs (e.g., "unlike Equiano, Wordsworth does not define himself in terms of economics; he instead is searching for"). However, you also need to show you have synthesized our readings/the issues: four or five entirely separate mini-essays on four or five authors, strung together, will not be highly rewarded.

WHAT--Choose one of the questions/topics below:

IMPORTANT:

*--for each of the options below, you must discuss at least four of our authors
--three of the authors must be ones we had books for (Locke, Equiano, Shelley, Marx, Darwin, and Freud)
--use your discretion for the remaining author (or several authors): Wordsworth, Keats, Adams, etc.*

a) Concepts of the "self" or a sense of "selfhood"--in respect to ethics, metaphysics, society, economics, psychology, and artistic production (the latter are meant to be brainstorming tools and suggestive, not mandatory, areas to cover)--are partially or largely dependent on historical/cultural context. This course is called "History of Ideas..." but it could also be called "A History of Selfhood..." or "The Rise of Individualism...." Discuss.

b) Western culture, from the time of the Renaissance, could be said to have increasingly worked towards the development and protection of individuality or liberty broadly conceived. Discuss. (This question is very similar to the previous one, except it is more politically/economically oriented.)

c) The course is called: "History of Ideas: From the Age of Enlightenment to the Age of Anxiety". Explore how we get from "Enlightenment" to "Anxiety".