

Possible Essay Topics

The following is a list of possible topics that students may write their essays on. If you have another topic in mind that is not listed below, please meet with me to discuss your idea. All essay topics need to be chosen and/or approved by Thursday, July 27th, at the latest.

I have scheduled two computer days: July 26th and August 2nd (both Wednesdays). Students should come to class five minutes early so we can walk to the Learning Center together. Don't expect to finish your essay in just these two days. You should be outlining and writing rough drafts outside of class. These computer lab days are your chances to share what you have written and utilize my resources. The more prepared you are, the more you will get out of these computer sessions.

The essay is worth 30% of your grade, so give yourself plenty of time to work on it. It should be between 5-7 pages. I will accept 4 pages, minimum, but I really want students to push themselves. Papers should be typed, double spaced and follow MLA standards for citations. HINT: Your syllabus has the citations for the three main texts and the movie.

1. The title of this course is "Culture and Justice in Literature." Each book explores a different culture—Australian, African, and Italian. Despite the vast differences amongst these cultures, the struggle for justice remains the same. Explore how the issue of justice crosses cultural boundaries by comparing and contrasting the different injustices explored in each book.
2. Though these books are set in the past, the issues that are addressed are still relevant today. Research a current event and explain it's relevance in relation to the three texts. Do any of the books enlighten the issues surrounding the current event?
3. Pick one character from each book and compare and contrast their cultures, mindsets, and opinions on justice.
4. Each book is written in a different style. Explore why each author wrote their story a specific way, including whether it was intentional or unintentional. How does the style affect the story? How does it affect the reader's response to each tale?
5. Self-reflect on your own cultural heritage in relation to the three books we have read. Are there any similarities or differences? Do you have any hopeful thoughts on how humanity's differences can be reconciled? Should they?
6. Themes that appear in all three books include, but are not limited to, assimilation, loss of cultural or religious identity, loss of family, loneliness, self-reliance, etc. Choose two or three of these themes and explore them in all three books.