Final Paper Assignment

In a well organized, fully documented, and analytical essay of 7-10 double-spaced pages, please respond to the following:

You have now taken the entire Bluffton College general-education sequence. These courses were intended not only to give you a background in what an Educated Person is expected to know—so that, if nothing else, you aren’t embarrassed when someone expects you to understand a literary or scientific allusion—but also as expressions of the college’s educational mission.* Drawing upon what you have been taught at Bluffton College, in both major and non-major courses, discuss this question:

How should you personally live? Is it feasible? Can it make a difference? If so, how and to whom? If not, why not? Discuss whether you are willing or able to commit to the way of life you advocate, over the long term.

You are expected to draw upon the content of more than one Bluffton College course, and to substantiate all facts and assertions with references.

Approach and Expectations

“Two perspectives” are not really pertinent to this assignment. Nevertheless, a good essay will present solid (and, as far as possible, documented) arguments both for and against the point of view being advocated. You should do your best to answer the arguments which you present against your thesis, and to anticipate and answer the objections opponents might give against the arguments you present for your thesis.

References within the body of the text must be in an acceptable format (and length! No 4-line parenthetical references!). Standard rules of spelling and grammar will be followed.

The stylistic boilerplate

I suggest that you begin with an analytical outline. This would include the following elements:

**Thesis** (that answers the question above)

**Bridge** (that introduces key concepts and aspects of our historical, political, and social context)

**Examples** (each section presenting a thesis statement, further context, and support whether from current events or other materials/stories/discussions from class)

**Restatement** (explaining what you’ve learned from this exercise, as well as new questions that this assignment has provoked in your own thinking and experience of current events)

Remember that as you revise your essay, some or all of the above may need to be restated as the essay content changes.

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* “To prepare students of all backgrounds for life as well as vocation, for responsible citizenship, for service to all peoples and ultimately for the purposes of God's universal kingdom.” See http://www.bluffton.edu/about/ at the bottom of the page.
You are seniors. I expect senior-level work. Proofread your essay. Have a coursemate read and critique it. You must, of course, follow standard bibliographic and reference format. See the Chicago Manual of Style, which was introduced in your 1st Year Seminar class, and is always for sale at the bookstore.*

For the essay rubric, see http://www.bluffton.edu/~bergerd/classes/LAS400/rubric.html. For the purposes of this essay, satisfaction of the “two perspectives” requirement will constitute following the directions given above, under “‘Two perspectives’ are not really pertinent…”

As with any written assignment, feel free to work with the Writing Center staff, or call upon me during office hours, or engage one another in preparation—up to the point when you begin writing. Your classmates may, indeed, offer the best and most helpful feedback. Good luck—some great essays come out of CVGC.

**The legal boilerplate**

This essay is worth 25% of your course grade. You are expected to spend proportionally more time and thought on it than on the previous essays, which were only 5, 10 or 20% each.

Your essay is due Tuesday, April 27, by e-mail to bergerd@bluffton.edu, in either Microsoft Word or plain text format. Paper copies will not be accepted. E-mail that is time-stamped later than April 27, 2004—after midnight—will NOT be accepted unless arrangements are made WITH THE REGISTRAR, in advance. Copies handed in on CD or floppy disk must be in my hands—not my mailbox—by the end of the day on Tuesday, April 27.

* Any standard bibliographic and reference format is acceptable, so long as it is complete. Remember, articles in anthologies must be listed by the author and title of the essay, not just the editor and title of the anthology! For example,


Schut and Jackson are both anthologies.