

Western Thought since 1600

Paper Assignment # 2

Please choose one of the following prompts from the questions listed below and write a well-argued 4-6 page essay response. Be sure to formulate a clear thesis and support your argument through the use of evidence drawn from the general information covered in the lectures and our readings (the primary sources I asked you to read each week). You should not consult other outside readings for this assignment.

When considering how to craft an historical argument think of yourself (hypothetically, not literally) as a lawyer: First, you will need an “opening statement” (i.e. a thesis) in which you introduce where you are headed with your argument, but don’t give away too much information right away. Second, you will want to lay out your evidence in a clear manner that explains to the reader (i.e. me) why and how your evidence supports your overall argument. Finally, in your “closing statement” (i.e. conclusion) you need to write a summary of your argument that once again reminds the reader of why your argument is the correct one and how the evidence supports your findings.

Since we are dealing with a limited number of texts, please use parenthetical notation when indicating a source. An example would be (Goethe, p. 25) or (Hauptmann, page 45).

You will need to turn in a paper copy on November 18 during your discussion section and submit an electronic copy to Turnitin.Com by 5pm on November 18. The procedure for submitting your papers to Turnitin.com is the same as before, but we will email the class a reminder about how to turn in the electronic versions prior to the submission date.

1. A common element that binds together the work of Goethe and Stevenson is an apparent anxiety with the current state of affairs. For Goethe it was a reaction to the rigid rationalism connected to the European Enlightenment, while Stevenson was reacting to latent fears regarding perceived social decay and degeneration. How did they each in their own way use fiction to intervene in public discussions on these matters? Drawing on textual evidence from each author, examine the extent to which each author was a product of his specific historical moment? Do element of their writings reflect any universal aspects of Western society? Be sure to draw on the texts and provide concrete examples (i.e. quotations with citation) that support your argument.
2. The growth of global capitalism in the latter half of the 19th century created several different types of power structures that favored one social group over another and allowed for a certain level of exploitation. In Europe we see this imbalance of power most acutely between the factory owners and the workers, while within the context of imperialism we see it in the relationship between the mother country and the colony. Drawing on your readings from Hauptmann’s *The Weavers* and those on imperialism (Casement, Morel, Wilhelm II, and Kipling) identify the power structures that were present and how one side attempted to use this power exploit the others. To what extent was capitalism during this stage of development dependent upon such power structures and how did the dominant ideologies justify such exploitation? Be sure to draw on the texts and provide concrete examples (i.e. quotations with citation) that support your argument.