

### Essay #4: The Lens Essay

A lens essay uses one text as a lens to examine another. The first text provides the theory, the theme or the paradigm, while the second text is the material and evidence to be examined. For this assignment, you will use some of Foucault's famous and influential analysis from *Discipline and Punish* to examine one of the texts we will be reading during this part of the semester: Emily Martin's "Menstruation, Work, and Class," Jonathan Kozol's "The Savage Inequalities of Public Education in New York," Nancy Scheper-Hughes's and Daniel Hoffman's "Brazilian Apartheid," or Nancy Scheper-Hughes's *Nervoso: Medicine, Sickness, and Human Needs*. (I will also accept papers on Phillipe Bourgois's *In Search of Respect*, if you want to read ahead.)

According to Foucault, people in the Western world currently live in a culture that is structured to encourage us to set limits on ourselves and discipline ourselves. He maintained that we are constrained not only by the structure of such institutions as schools and by people in authority, but also by ourselves: we are self-policing. Because of this, he claimed, power is *capillary* rather than simply the effect of brute force from above, and we discipline ourselves and each other into our relative places in the social hierarchy.

Consider this argument in your chosen article. You may choose to argue either for or against a Foucauldian interpretation of the essay, but in either case, I expect you to do a close reading of the text and present detailed and careful evidence to back up your claims. Write a 5.5-7 page essay exploring the themes of discipline, constraint, power, and policing in your chosen text and presenting a coherent argument either for or against a Foucauldian interpretation. You may use any of the chapters from Foucault that we have read this semester ("The Means of Correct Training," "Docile Bodies," or "Panopticism"), and you may choose to concentrate on a portion of his theory (capillary power, self-policing, disciplining the body, the importance of the Panopticon), if you wish.

This should be a **formal** essay, written in clear academic style. While I (as a social scientist rather than a humanist) do not require you to completely abjure the use of the first person, I do require all other elements of formality.

The essay will be graded on your clear understanding of both texts, the relevant application of the lens text to your chosen text, the strength and originality of your thesis and arguments (which should be well-focused), how clear and well-supported the arguments are, essay structure and flow, and on the clarity, appropriateness, and strength of the language.

This essay should be **five and a half to seven pages long**, exclusive of the Works Cited page.

Remember to do the following:

- Write a thesis that argues for your opinion coherently and convincingly.**
- Support your thesis with relevant examples drawn from your text(s).**
- Use relevant sources to support your argument.**
- Structure your essay in such a way that each point leads naturally to the next and provides not only a good flow for the reader, but a build-up of convincing arguments.**
- Use correct and clear language.**
- Use appropriate formatting and citation.**
- All papers must be typed or word-processed *and printed out*. No email submissions will be accepted.
- Three (3) copies of each rough draft must be brought to class for peer review.
- Your full name must appear on the first page of the paper and your last name in a header or footer in subsequent pages.
- All papers must be spell checked; they must have page numbers; they must use in-text citation; they must have a correctly formatted Works Cited page; they must have a title; they

must be written in 12-point font and have margins of one inch; they must be double-spaced; **and all of these things are required for every draft.** (Please refer to the handouts on citation and essay style)

--Every paper must have a *cover letter*. (Please refer to the handout on cover letters)

--A peer review letter must be provided for every paper you review during the peer review cycle.

--Written work submitted later than fifteen minutes after the beginning of class on the due date will be counted as a day late. Late papers are lowered by a third of a grade for each day late (i.e. a B+ paper will be graded B), except in cases of illness or emergency.

--**All sources MUST be cited.**

Your **first draft is due on 12/4**. Please remember to bring three copies (four if you wish to retain one) to class, and to prepare a cover letter for each one.

Your **final draft is due on 12/11**. You need bring only one copy, but do not forget the cover letter, your commented-on copies of the previous draft, and peer review letters.