

History 17B, Practice Essays

Guidelines: Essays must 3-6 pages, typed, double-spaced. Do not forget to put your name and section number on your essay. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. If you have questions on the meaning of plagiarism please consult the West Valley College information catalog, *The History Handbook* or your instructor.

Practice Essay Group 1: **(Rough Draft due, 3/8/06-MW; 3/9/06-TTH
Final Draft due, 3/22/05-MW; 3/23/06-TTH):**

- 1) Working people expressed antipathy to the lack of control of their work, lives and government. Use the readings in *Dissent in America*, to explain what kinds of alternatives to corporate control they sought. (Hint: Pick two of the following: the Populist and Socialist Party platforms, Knights of Labor constitution (1878), Mother Jones speech (1903) and Walter Rauschenbusch “*The Social Gospel*”).
- 2) Indigenous people suffered loss of their way of life because of the growing settlement of the West by white Americans. Use the speech of Chief Joseph from *Dissent in America*, to explain their view of the settlement of white Americans on their lands.
- 3) Though women in the second half of the 19th Century could not vote they were active participants in politics of reform in the United States. Pick one the following essays from in *Dissent in America*: Francis Willard, Jane Adams and Mother Jones to explain how women were involved in social reform.
- 4) Environmental causes did not begin their influence U. S. politics in the 1960’s. Use the reading by John Muir in *Dissent in America* to explain how conservationism influenced the history of the environmental movement from the 1890’s.
- 5) Black Americans became increasingly forced back to the margins of U.S. society in the second half of the 19th Century and into the beginning of the 20th Century. Booker T. Washington and W.E. B. DuBois were two poles of a debate of how Black Americans should respond to white supremacy, disenfranchisement and violent vigilante attacks (lynching). Use the essays in *Dissent in America* to examine their debate.
- 6) From 1898-1914, many U.S. government officials, from the President to the Congress, supported an aggressive policy of territorial annexation and expansion outside the continental United States. Use the readings from *Dissent in America* to explain anti-imperialist sentiment among leaders such as Carl Schurz and William Jennings Bryan.
- 7) Compare the anti-war speeches of Socialist leader Eugene V. Debs and Republican Robert M. LaFollette?

Practice Essay Group 2: **(Rough draft due, 5/3/06-MW; 5/4/06-TTH
Final draft due, 5/17/06-MW; 5/18/06-TTH)**

- 1) Historians often portray the 1920's as a return to normalcy. Choose among the documents from the following, Margaret Sanger, Marcus Garvey, H.L. Mencken, and Langston Hughes. Analyze the depth of dissent underneath this decade of "prosperity."
- 2) The decade of the 1930's pushed to prominence politicians and ideas not considered by most Americans. Explain how Huey Long and Father Coughlin appealed to Depression Era Americans.
- 3) Explain the importance of the Social Security Act (1935) and Wagner Act (1935) and how it aided working class Americans by examination of texts of these important pieces of New Deal legislation.
- 4) Analyze how dissent was voiced in the context of WWII. Choose between the essay of pacifist Dave Dellinger and the letters of interned Japanese-American Minoru Yasui to explain WWII dissent.
- 5) The decade of the 1950's was both a period of rebellion and repression. Use the readings in *Dissent in America* and *Who Built America Vol. 2.* to explain how conformity and rebellion could coexist.
- 6) Black American and other peoples of color demanded a space and place in America in the 1960's and early 1970's. No one group of people of color employed the same political tactics. Using the readings in *Dissent in America*, compare and contrast how tactics of a radical break with the system often converged with those demanding inclusion.
- 7) Feminist ideas and politics found the resurgence in the late 1960's and early 1970's. Choose from one of the following: Betty Friedan or Gloria Steinem to outline the politics of the second wave of feminism.
- 8) Gays and lesbians often faced harassment and extortion from authorities. Show how the flyer protesting police harassment at Stonewall's fit into the general protest movements of the 1960's.
- 9) Student activists became oriented to radical leftist politics in the 1960's. Choose one document from the following: SDS Port Huron Statement, Mario Savio-Free Speech Movement and Carl Oglesby "Name the System" and explain the differences between the Old and New Left.

10) The conservative resurgence in the 1980's spawned a new generation of right and left wing activists. Compare the statements of Paul Weyrich, a conservative activist/fundraiser and ACT-UP activists. Do their appeals to their main audience converge or diverge in their appeal?