

English 215
Fall 2020
Dr. Ridinger-Dotterman

Essay 1

The first essay for this course engages the rhetorical skills of analysis and argument. After completing the assigned course readings and viewing the materials in the weekly folders up to this point in the course, as well as reading the article “Christopher Columbus Statue Debate Rises as Controversial Statues Fall across the Country,” write an essay in response to the following prompt.

Scenario:

Your local community has earmarked funds for revitalizing its largest public park. As part of the revitalization project, the city council is deciding whether to remove or restore a large statue located in the center of the park.

In order to make its decision, the city council has solicited the input of a variety of people in the community. As a student of Early American literature, you have been asked to give your opinion about the appropriate future of the statue.

You are asked to prepare a speech to be delivered to the town council in which you give your recommendation for removal or replacement of the statue.

As part of your speech, you should consider the following:

- What contribution did the individual(s) immortalized in the statue make to American culture?
- What historical events or cultural values are emphasized by the presence of the statue?
- If you are arguing for the statue’s removal, why? What will removing the statue signal about the appropriate place of the historical figure(s) in American culture?
- If you are arguing for the statue’s restoration, why? What will keeping the statue signal about the appropriate place of the historical figure(s) in American culture? Do you recommend including any additional signage to give people in the park context about the figure? If so, what do you recommend?

Like a good essay, your speech should include an engaging introduction, offer a clear central argument that is made clear early in the speech (thesis), and develop distinct, clear points of support for the argument. Because you have been asked to speak to the council specifically in your capacity as a student of Early American literature, your speech should draw most of its evidence from an analysis of the assigned literary text(s) for the class, though you may also refer to the supplementary readings and videos from the weekly folders. You should not use other sources in your essay.

Your speech should be the equivalent of 4-5 typed pages, formatted using MLA conventions for document style and citation format. The town council will receive a written copy of your speech, which will be reviewed during the decision-making process. Therefore, it is important that you cite and document your sources.

For this assignment, you can choose ONE of the following (imaginary) statues to write your speech about:

- A statue of Christopher Columbus
- A statue of the Pilgrims landing at Plymouth Rock
- A statue of John Winthrop
- A statue of Anne Bradstreet
- A statue of Anne Hutchinson
- A statue of Alexander Hamilton
- A statue of Thomas Jefferson

A rough draft of the paper should be ready to exchange with your group members by **11:59 p.m., on Wednesday, October 7**. Your group will complete a peer review as that folder's wiki assignment.

A revised draft is **due for grading by 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, October 21**.

Your paper will be evaluated on the following criteria:

Development of Ideas

- Does the essay respond fully to the prompt?
- Does the essay fully develop a central argument?
- Are supporting points fully explained and supported with evidence and reasoning?

Textual Analysis

- Does the essay engage in substantive analysis of the literary text(s)?
- Are references to texts fully explained?
- Are connections between texts and the claims they are supporting clear?
- Are texts properly cited in MLA format?

Organization

- Does the essay have a clear thesis statement?
- Are paragraphs organized in support of a single idea?
- Is there a clear connection between each paragraph and the thesis statement?
- Is there a logical pattern of development in support of the thesis?

Mechanics and Usage

- Does the essay use a variety of sentence lengths and structures to create sentence fluency?
- Does the essay use effective diction?
- Does the essay avoid errors in grammar and syntax (particularly those we have covered in class)?
- Is the essay formatted in MLA document style?