*U.S. History (CP: Gr. 11) New West Charter Instructor: Ms. Hynes*

**Culminating Project (HON)**

**Persuasive Essay: A Theory of American History**

Introduction:

In this essay, you will practice focused, persuasive writing in which you assert and defend a thesis. Writing in the history discipline is often a case of joining an existing historical dialogue. In more rare cases, it’s about STARTING that dialogue. Your task for this essay is to **develop an original theory of American history, OR, to add to, elaborate on, or disagree with an existing theory of American history.** Please submit a PAPER COPY of your proposed thesis to the teacher for approval before you move forward with your essay!

Example:

Elaborating on an existing theory of American history:

According to Susan Grant,*“Throughout U.S. history, civil disobedience and peaceful protest has been shown to be the most effective way to approach the fight for civil rights”. (Grant, “A Brief History of the United States”. Random House. 2011)*

Thesis:

*Contrary to Grant’s assertion, it can be argued that in fact, militant and even sometimes even aggressive revolution spurs change as well. And in many cases, it serves as a jarring “wake-up call” to the public that change is both needed and demanded (examples: Nat Turner Rebellion, Black Panthers, Malcolm X).*

Your essay should meet the following criteria:

* 600 - 700 words (2 – 3 pages)
* CLEAR, focused, persuasive thesis
* The essay is written using formal, academic language
* The essay is informed by at least FOUR RELIABLE, academic research sources
* The essay properly cites information used from research sources in the body of the text using brackets (for APA), or footnotes (for MLA or Chicago Style).
* The essay includes a properly-formatted “bibliography” or “works cited” page.

Due Date: Friday May 19

Point Value: 60 points

Grading Rubric: Biographical Essay

Category/Descriptor Points

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| --- | --- |
| Knowledge/Understanding:  The essay reflects a clear understanding of their topic’s significance and place in American history. | 15 10 5 1 |
| Research/Inquiry:  The essay is informed by at least four reliable academic sources which are properly cited within the body of the text, and a properly-formatted “bibliography” or “works cited” page is included. | 15 10 5 1 |
| Communication:  The essay is very informative, with enriching details which engage the reader. The text is written in a persuasive style with a CLEAR and focused thesis. The overall structure and individual paragraphs are well-organized for clarity and a smooth flow of ideas. Formal academic language is used throughout. and there are virtually no grammar, spelling, sentence structure or punctuation issues. | 15 10 5 1 |
| Execution:  The essay is complete, well-edited, meets ALL assignment criteria, is artfully written and shows evidence of planning and effort. | 15 10 5 1 |

Total: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_/60