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You will be required to submit many writing assignments for this course. **This exam is a diagnostic one (1) page essay exam**, the purpose of which is to help you assess your writing skills for this course. The exam will be graded **PASS/NOT PASS**. I will give a NOT PASS score to any paper that demonstrates repeated failure to follow the rules of basic English grammar or to any paper lacking clarity. A NOT PASS score typically is an indication that (a) your writing skills are below freshman college level or (b) you've failed to proofread your paper and thus have not taken this assignment seriously.

So, if you receive a NOT PASS please seek tutoring now, purchase and use a good writing guide, get your act together, or see me for advice.

*NB: All examples are direct quotes from President George W. Bush. For commentary on the President's linguistic difficulties, see Christopher Hitchens' essay in *The Nation*. A complete listing of "Bushisms" is on Slate.com.*

### **Misuse of homonyms or near sound-alikes**

Know the difference between, e.g., affect/effect, by/buy, there/their, suppose/supposed, than/then, etc. A spell-checking program will not catch these errors.

*"I understand there's a suspicion that we—we're too security-conscience."*

### **Lack of Subject-Verb agreement**

*Rarely is the question asked: Is our children learning?*

### **Poor grammar**

*You teach a child to read, and he or her will be able to pass a literacy test.*

### **Incoherence**

*They underestimated me. We ought to make the pie higher.*

### **Imprecision**

*We spent a lot of time talking about Africa, as we should. Africa is a nation that suffers from incredible disease.*

*For a century and a half now, America and Japan have formed one of the great and enduring alliances of modern times.*

*I am mindful not only of preserving executive powers for myself, but for predecessors as well.*

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Below are the three essay topics. Select one topic. Your essay should be a minimum of 250-300 words or approximately one (1) page. Under no circumstances should your essay exceed one page. Your papers are to be typed, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins (top, bottom, sides). Your name (do not include your student ID) and this course title must appear single spaced in the upper right hand header of the paper. Use this page as a guide. The body of your essay should begin immediately beneath the horizontal line above and end approximately at the horizontal line at the bottom of this page.

Please use a standard, non-italic font and a reasonable type-size (e.g., 12-point Times New Roman). No novelty fonts. Do not use a title for the essay. But please indicate which essay question you are answering (e.g., #1, #2, #3). Essays not meeting any one of these criteria automatically receive a NOT PASS.

*Essays are due via iLearn before the next class session*

SELECT ONE!

ESSAY #1 Identify a stereotyped group to which you belong. Describe the stereotype and discuss where or how we see the depiction (i.e., in TV commercials or programs, newspaper cartoons, books, movies, etc). Be specific. Then show that the stereotype is just or refute it as unjust.

ESSAY #2 Please read and think about the following two quotations: [A] "Any homeless person could get a job if she or he really wanted to work." [B] "Most homeless people were once normal working citizens who were let down by society." In your essay, please do the following:

1. Compare the statements. Explain how they are similar.
2. Contrast the statements. Explain how they differ.
3. Take a position with respect to the two statements by defending one of them or mediating between them, and justify your defense with an example from your own observation or experience.

ESSAY #3

Television commercials affect our lives in a variety of ways. Write an essay in which you examine the effects of television commercials upon society or upon private lives.

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