English 101:   **Critical Analysis of an Essay: FINAL EXAM PREPARATION**

Materials: Bluebook, Pens (no pencil allowed), Dictionary (optional), ONE page outline, textbooks

For your final exam you will write an essay of critical analysis in response to one of the essays we discussed in class: "An Orgy of Power," p. 252; "Living Will," p. 309 "Loaded," p. 265 and "I was a Marine; I Don't Want a Gun in My Classroom" (available online). "Lucky Girl," p. 321; "We Do Abortions Here," by Sallie Tisdale (available online)

 The exam will consist of several prompts, all referencing the above essays. You will choose ONE prompt and respond with a 5-7 paragraph essay.

PREPARATION:

The best way to prepare for this exam is to carefully read the essays.

Reading Strategies:

Identify the author's thesis (might be implicit) and purpose.

Analyze the structure of the essay by identifying all main ideas in each paragraph. Notice how all the ideas connect and the progression of thought. Where did the writer begin in his/her understanding of the subject matter and where did he/she end up? In other words, what did the author learn about his/her subject?

What makes this essay different or unique from other essays that you have read?

How does this author use language? Is it flowery and descriptive? Spare and to the point? Descriptive?

What

Consult a dictionary or encyclopedia to understand unfamiliar words.

Make an outline of the work or write a description of it.

Write a summary of the work.

Determine the purpose which could be To inform with factual material, To persuade with appeal to reason or emotions, To entertain (to affect people's emotions).

Evaluate the degree to which the author has accomplished his purpose.

Evaluate your own reactions to the essay. Do you have any experience with the subject matter that might affect your judgment?

If the purpose is to inform, has the material been presented clearly, accurately, with order and coherence?

If the purpose is to persuade, look for evidence, logical reasoning, contrary evidence.

If the purpose was to entertain, determine how emotions are affected: does it make you laugh, cry, feel angry? Why did it affect you? What is the general tone of the essay?

Does the author ever contradict himself/herself or make assumptions or pose any unanswered questions? How does this affect your reading of the essay?

What is the author's view of the world? Does is match your view of the world? If not, why not? Does this affect your reactions to the text?

In the end, what does the writer want his/her audience to know about the subject? What should we remember? To what degree has the author accomplished this goal?

Rubric for Critical Analysis Essay (Grading Criteria for your final exam)

A. Does the student demonstrate a clear understanding of the text being analyzed?
B. Does all the writing (outside of quotation marks) belong to the student? Does the student's writing demonstrate original ideas and a unique voice and style that is consistent with other writing the student has submitted in previous assignments?
C. Does the student's essay have a clear structure? (paragraphs, transitions, logical order)
D. Does the student include a clearly worded thesis statement at the beginning of the essay in which he/she makes observations about the essay that go beyond the obvious or factual?
E. Does the essay focus on 2-3 critical aspects of the essay and not simply offer simple summary?
F. Do the body paragraphs of the essay support the claim of the thesis with specific examples and discussion from the text?
G. Has the student referenced the text with quotations and paraphrase to support his/her observations?
H. Is all quoted material introduced with a signal phrase and followed by a page number?
I. Does the essay read clearly from start to finish with minimal grammatical errors, especially run-on sentences, sentence fragments, and verb tense errors?
J. Does the student attempt to connect with his audience? (Use of "I" is fine, as is including a discussion of personal response/experience if relevant)

GOOD LUCK!