

Note: Students must attempt **two essays** for a passing grade. Please see detailed guidelines for the essay at the end of this document. Please upload your file as a .doc, .docx or .pdf file. If using Google docs, please save your file in one of these formats. I cannot open .Pages files on my computer so please do not save your exam in this format.

### Essay Prompts

Write 800-900 word essays [3-4 double spaced pages] in response to **any two** (choice of three) of the prompts below. Please see guidelines after the prompts for detailed instructions.

1.

After studying the broad outlines of post-1865 American history, what in your **informed** opinion has been the key dividing line in modern American history and why – race, class, gender, location (urban/rural; North/South), religion?

To be complete, your essay must **contextualize** your chosen category against social, economic, cultural or political **history** and provide concrete examples from primary and secondary sources to support your claims. [Note: You may construct a complex response but your generalizations have to be supported with concrete evidence].

2. How did the events and trends of the 1960s shape the United States that emerged in the 1980s?

3. Why could the Vietnam War not be represented as a heroic war (as, for example, World War II was)? In 800-900 words, using Tim O'Brien's short story "In the Field" (and contextualizing it with historical information), analyze the impact of the Vietnam War on American society.

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## **Instructions (Important, please read carefully)**

1) Citations: Citations can be simple and in-text. Each page of your exam essay must have at least one citation either as paraphrasing or as direct

quotes, demonstrating a continuous engagement with readings (primary or secondary sources) throughout the essay. Yes, I will count.

Do not fill up pages with block quotes, however.

2) Research: You do not have to do fresh research for the exam. Use all the material you have – assigned readings, research readings for your paper, digital repositories used in the discussion board activities, primary sources – to provide concrete examples for your argument. Even if you draw on examples already covered in your paper, don't repeat previous writing.

3) Works Cited: A short works cited page must be added to the exam.

4) The following rubric applies:

- Your exam essay will be graded for argument, organization, evidence, grammar and punctuation.
- To repeat: The essay will be judged on clarity of argument (i.e. you must have a thesis that develops over the course of the essay), accuracy (speculation is not historical evidence), organization (argument should flow smoothly and not be choppy), and last but definitely not least, spelling and grammar.
- Essays should have an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion.
- You may craft imaginative theses but in order to be persuasive you must back up all generalizations with historical evidence.
- Treat the essay as an academic exercise and avoid overly casual phrasing or slang.
- This is a test of your grasp of content and concepts, and your ability to synthesize material already studied.