

## Guidelines for the Second Paper

Final versions are due by e-mail on May 31<sup>st</sup>.

If you'd like feedback from Niall, please send your paper to him at nm0730@bard.edu, and coordinate with him on an appointment time.

If you'd like feedback from me, please send your paper as a Word attachment to armytage@bard.edu

If you want to choose a topic other than those suggested below, please discuss it with me before you get going.

### Suggested topics

1. Discuss the moral judgments that Olaudah Equiano expresses in his *Interesting Narrative*. What does he consider to be morally right, and what does he consider to be morally wrong? What are the bases for these judgments? Does Equiano's morality change or evolve during the course of the *Narrative*?
2. How does Mary Wollstonecraft portray the women of her time in *Vindication of the Rights of Women*? In her view, what is their intellectual status? What kinds of power do they exercise? What causes women to be the way they are, and what remedies does she propose?
3. In his *Groundwork for a Metaphysics of Morals*, Immanuel Kant describes the fundamental ideas of a new moral system and argues that it is superior to alternative systems. Construct a moral system of your own (noting outside influences if you have some, but taking primary responsibility yourself), and try to construct an argument in favor of this system, as Kant does. Describe the essential elements of Kant's system, and contrast them with yours.
4. Explain some of the diagnoses of psychological or spiritual harms caused by capitalism that Karl Marx delivers in *Estranged Labor* and *Private Property and Communism*. For each of these, try to describe a practical solution of your own that might mitigate or cure the identified social illness.

5. Describe parallels between Friedrich Nietzsche's thought as expressed in *On the Genealogy of Morality* and/or *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and your own psychological development, efforts toward self-realization, etc.
6. Combining your own ideas with Sigmund Freud's analysis in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, discuss the limits to human happiness and some of the possible strategies we may use to cope with these limits.
7. Discuss the vision of America presented in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* in relation to America as it exists today. What has changed, and what has remained the same? In what ways is the text still relevant today. You may discuss historical developments such as the Civil Rights Movement. You may discuss economic and legal developments such as racial disparities in income, wealth, and incarceration. You may discuss current events such as the Black Lives Matter movement and the persistence of racial bias in law enforcement. You may even discuss events or experiences in your own life. Whichever of these you choose, try to tie your analysis as closely as possible to Ellison's original text.