

Introduction to Business and Society

SOSC 1340/1349 A and B, 2015-16 Essay 2

Due: February 11 (B) or 12 (A), in lecture

Length: 6-8 pages/1500-2000 words (double spaced, 12 point font, 2.5 cm margins)

Value: 30 marks (out of 150)

Late essays will be subject to a -2% penalty per day

Synthesizing Course Materials

You are required to draw on one of either the films *Surviving Progress* and *The Corporation* or the creative readings by Rice, Garrett and Steinbeck to illustrate your understanding of the key concepts raised in the text(s) you will be analyzing. The essay writing process involves several stages: formulating a working thesis, organizing your notes and constructing an essay plan. See the guidelines from the first essay instructions and review Shea and Whitla, part 4.

Independent Research

You are writing a 'persuasive essay' (Shea and Whitla, pp. 228-9) which involves some research. You will need to find and use two secondary ACADEMIC sources for this essay (no Wikipedia, dictionary.com, etc.). You **MUST** use proper referencing techniques (consult Shea and Whitla, chapter 9). Failure to do properly and consistently document and acknowledge your sources constitutes PLAGARISM and makes you subject to academic sanction.

Instructions

Pick one of the essay topics below. DO NOT simply answer the questions in the order that they appear in the topic. The order of presentation is something you need to think deeply about: you need to **think about what it is that you want to say and the order that it would be best to say it** in order to show how well you understand the concepts, issues and arguments under consideration. Return to your **introduction** after you have completed your draft to ensure that the **order of presentation you outline here corresponds to the structure of your essay**.

Formal Requirements

Essays must include a title page (include your name, student number, TAs name and submission date) and a **properly formatted bibliography**. Papers should be **double spaced**, with **12 point font** (Times New Roman, Arial or Cambria are common ones) and **one inch margins**. Each page of your essay (not including the title page, which would be page '0') must be numbered. Your essay must start with a comprehensive introduction which includes: i. The position the author takes on the key question; ii. Your thesis; and iii. An explanation of how your essay will be organized. Your essay must have a clear paragraph structure, with each paragraph starting with a clear topic sentence.

*You are required to complete the SPARK module on selecting sources at: http://www.yorku.ca/spark/books_journals_more/index.html

Essay Topics

1. What is the difference between real progress and 'progress traps' according to Wright? Why does he refer to civilization as a 'pyramid scheme'? What is the Victorian ideal of progress, and how might this have contributed to an ideology of progress that has helped to obscure the fact that our civilization is in the midst of 'the biggest progress trap in human history'?
2. What is the difference between the 'social division of labour' and the 'detail division of labour', according to Braverman? What are the social consequences of the capitalist organization of production? What is the Babbage Principle and how does its application to the labour process result in the "degradation of work"? How can we use Rice's play to illustrate the effects Braverman describes?
3. How does Nace define the modern corporation and how is it different from the 'classical' form? What are the 'essential characteristics' of the corporation, according to Glasbeek? How does limited liability help to protect investors (shareholders) and executives, managers and directors of the corporation from individual responsibility? Who—or what—is responsible for what happens to the farmers in Steinbeck's story?
4. Should the corporation have legal and ethical obligations to society beyond promoting the private interests—maximizing profits—of shareholders? Why does Friedman refer to 'social responsibility' as a 'dangerous doctrine'? How does Glasbeek's critique of the ethical justification of capitalism represent a response to Friedman? Is Garrett's main character (Mr. Galt) acting to maximize private interests, or the public interest?