

## English 130 Wright

### Essay #1: Imaginative narrative

#### Imagining Civil Disobedience

We'll be exploring the concept of civil disobedience this semester, looking at the history and future of the concept. Because you may or may not have practiced civil disobedience in the past, we'll start by imagining a situation that may call for civil disobedience. You'll create a fictional response to a situation that may call for civil disobedience, and explore its circumstances and outcome.

You'll start thinking about the assignment by considering one of the scenarios listed below. These are short and sketchy on purpose; it's your job to use your imagination to fill in the rest of the story. You need to stick to the scenario, but anything beyond that is yours to decide.

#### The Scenarios

1. A new religious movement arises in the nation, led by a popular, charismatic preacher. The ideals of this movement are radically different from those of the nation's government. Because of this, some of the followers of the religion are opposed to paying taxes. They feel that they should only pay the government if the government fits their ideals, and they ask their leader to endorse and recommend the practice of not paying taxes. What do the followers do?
2. A young man betrays his country, causing great trouble and destruction. He dies in this act of rebellion. Because the young man died a traitor, the country's leader orders the family not to hold a funeral, not to mourn, and not to commemorate him in any way. His sisters are devastated; they want to mourn their brother, but they are not allowed. What do his sisters do?
3. The tyrannical leader of a nation fears trouble from a certain minority group within the country. In order to eliminate that group, the leader orders the country's nurses to kill all the male children born in that minority group. The nurses are appalled at this idea, but also afraid for their own safety if they disobey the leader. What do the nurses do?
4. The police are seeking a vicious serial killer, guilty of many horrible crimes. They find out, though, that the killer has joined a peaceful religious order, repented his crimes and devoted his life to non-violence. Members of the religious order insist that he has changed and will not harm any more people, but will live in peace. His victims' families clamor for revenge. What do the police do?

#### Decide on a setting

Your first task in planning this imaginative essay is choosing a setting. You'll consider a way to imagine these scenarios happening, and write from that. Some possible choices:

- Imagine it happened to you. What circumstances could have led to this scenario in your life? How would you feel, and what would you do about it?
- Imagine it happening somewhere in the world in the near future. Where in the world might this scenario happen? What situations would lead to this?
- Imagine it happening in a mythical fantasy or science-fiction world. What would lead to this scenario in an imaginary world? How would they feel and act about it?

#### Decide on a format

There are a few possible forms to tell your imaginative story. Some possible choices:

- Write a letter in the first-person perspective, as if it actually happened to you and you wanted to tell about it.

- Write it as a news report, telling the story in a newspaper or magazine.
- Write it as a third-person story, narrating the events.
- Write it as a script or screenplay, dramatizing the events with dialogue.

These aren't the only options. If you think of another, let me know.

### Audience

Your audience for this imaginative essay consists of college-educated readers who are interested in the concept of civil disobedience. These readers will want to understand the concept of civil disobedience through a hypothetical example. You'll choose language appropriate to your story; the style and diction you choose will probably be somewhat formal, though you may choose to use some casual language if the story calls for it.

### Stipulations

Your essay must be typed and double-spaced, using a 12-point academic font.

Your essay should be at least 1000 words long. This will be approximately four pages.

You should plan to meet with a Writing Center tutor at least once during the process of this paper. Make the appointment online using your username and password.

I am available to help. Talk to me during or after class, or in my office hour, or you can email your questions to [vawright@umich.edu](mailto:vawright@umich.edu).

**The rough draft will be due Tuesday, September 19.**

**The final draft will be due Thursday, September 28.**

## Essay One Rubric

Save this page and submit it with your final draft.

Student:

Title of paper:

<i><b>Criterion</b></i>	<i><b>Response</b></i>	<i><b>Pts.</b></i>	
1. Is the paper developed to the length required by the assignment? Does it explore all the important aspects of the scenario?		20	
2. Is the paper interesting and engaging to read? Has the writer used imagination to connect to the scenario?		20	
3. Does the narrative fit the assignment? Does it fit with the topic of civil disobedience that we've been discussing in class?		20	
4. Does the writer make clear what lessons can be learned from the experience? Are these lessons specific and arguable?		20	
5. Does the writing consistently follow the appropriate rules of English grammar? Are words and sentences chosen carefully for effect?		20	
	Total Points	100	

Points by category: Excellent work: 20. Satisfactory work: 15. Weak work: 10. Poor or unacceptable work: 5.