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History 109  
Spring Semester 2017  
Professor Oscar Cañedo

## **Henry Ford Legacy Essay**

For this assignment, you are to compose an essay in which you analyze the historical and cultural impact that Henry Ford has had on modern United States history. After you watch the PBS “American Experience” program on the founder of the Ford Motor Company, you are to complete a 4-6 page essay, and submit it through the Blackboard assignments section. **Make sure you submit your paper in either Word, Pages or PDF format, and the due date for this assignment is Friday, April 28 at 11:59 PM.** This report will count as 15% of your overall class grade. Late papers will be accepted for one week only after this due date, and will be assessed with a full grade deduction. Please be sure to include a title page in your essay, but remember that a title page does not count toward the 4-6 pages of the text of your essay. But you do not need a works cited page for this assignment, just keep your focus on discussing topics and themes from this program.

For this essay, there are three stages that I’d like for you to follow as you complete. Let’s start with the first stage. First, after your opening paragraph in which you introduce the complete scope of your arguments, begin your essay by discussing what impact you think Henry Ford has had on either modern US history or your life, either positive or negative. For example, have you owned or driven a Ford vehicle? What are some of your earliest impressions about Ford? How much of a cultural and political impact do you think Ford had on the nation during his lifetime? In short, use the first part of your essay to reflect on your own experiences with Ford’s legacy.

For your second part of the essay, please comment at least three of the elements from the Henry Ford program. What portions of the program did you find most interesting? What is your reaction to these topics? How do these topics relate to the wider scope of modern United States history? For example, what did he think about his investors in his first company? What do you think about his anti-Semitic sentiments? What do you think about his constant clashes with his son Edsel? Those are just three examples of elements you can discuss, but you are welcome to choose any three elements of the documentary to discuss. **But please do not provide a detailed summary of the entire Henry Ford program. That is not the purpose of the assignment.** If you attempt to summarize the entire program in your essay, that will result in a reduction of your essay grade. In other words, all I want for the second part of your essay is for you to provide a brief summary and commentary on a few elements of Henry Ford’s life and career.

And for the final part of this assignment, please assess the importance of Henry Ford within the context of modern United States history. Consider these following questions as you compose your concluding paragraphs of your essay: What would you

say were his biggest influences on the history and culture of the country? How was Ford both a cultural and political figure in the nation's history? How did Ford and his work reflect on the changes going on in the nation from the 1890s through 1920s? And how is Henry Ford's legacy relevant in modern times in the United States? You may want to refer to the Give Me Liberty textbook for background information to assist you in preparing this part of the essay.



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