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History 109 Spring Semester 2017 Professor Oscar Cañedo

## Walt Disney Legacy Essay

For this assignment, you are to compose an essay in which you analyze the historical and cultural impact that Walt Disney has had on modern American history. Watch both installments of the PBS "American Experience" program on the founder of Disneyland, then complete a 4-5 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 Walt Disney has had on your life, either positive or negative. For example, were you fans of any of his animated characters like Mickey Mouse or Donald Duck? Did you ever like the live action movies like "Mary Poppins" or "The Nutty Professor?" And did you have any experiences at the theme parks such as Disneyland or Walt Disney World? In short, use the first part of your essay to reflect on your own experiences with Disney's legacy.

For your second part of the essay, please comment on at least three of the elements from the Walt Disney program. For example, you can devote your attention to Disney's early animation career, the impact of "Snow White," and the labor problems at his studio. Please choose any three elements that interest you the most, and consider some of these questions: What is your reaction to these topics? What do these topics reveal about Walt Disney's character? How do these topics affect your perspective on Walt Disney? Think about these kinds of questions as you work on this part of the assignment. **Do not provide a detailed summary of the entire Walt Disney program for this part of the assignment. 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 Walt Disney's life and career.

And for the final part of this assignment, please assess the importance of Walt Disney within the context of American 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 nation? How was Disney both a cultural and political figure in the nation's history? How did Disney and his work reflect on the changes going on in the nation from the 1920s through 1950s? And how is Walt Disney'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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