Standardized testing, the dominant form of K-12 education assessment by both the state and federal government, began to take root in the American educational system in the 1970s and 1980s. Currently school systems in the U.S. spend about $1100 per student to administer these assessments yearly, and most states rely on test scores to determine the allocation of education funds.

One of the major critiques of this form of assessment is that because of the high stakes attached to the standardized test (state and federal funding), teachers spend most of the school year “teaching to the test”, and in doing so students do not get a chance to develop a critical understanding of the material. Rather, in preparing for standardized testing students are asked to memorize concepts and events without an understanding the contextual relationships between them. This is especially the case with the subject of history, and is something scholars of the discipline, such as Courtney Luckhardt, have begun to raise alarm about.

Luckhardt calls this type of rote memorization of history “memory history”, meaning that our understanding of history is decontextualized and fragmented. She argues that to study our history properly we must acquire a “historical consciousness” instead of “memory history”. Learning to view our past with a “historical consciousness” will allow us to critically see how our histories have shaped the present, for good or for bad.

So what does have to do with “Community”, our course theme? Well, I would argue that in order to be a full, participating member of any community, whether that be as supporters of a professional sports team or more importantly citizens, we must have an understanding of our community’s history and its shaping of the present.

**Assignment**As a student at the University of D, you not only hold membership within the university community, but you are also a member of the City o Dayton and Miami Valley communities. Because of this you will research a significant event or element of our greater Dayton history.

The goal of your research is:  
1) to develop an understanding of this historical element or event;

2) uncover how it has impacted our community’s past,

3) and how it continues to impact our region and community.

You will need to develop a research question(s) to help guide your research. And then after answering that question, develop a thesis to guide your argument, supporting your claims about the issue with creditable sources. Be sure to integrate your evidence through a mixture of direct quotations, paraphrases, and summaries to provide support for your thesis.

**Evaluation Criteria:**

Be sure to include an introduction, statement of purpose (thesis), supporting body, and conclusion. In evaluating your work, I'll be looking at your organization, content, and mechanics. A major objective of the assignment involves careful analysis and offering your position on the issue explored.

**Length:** 8-10 typewritten pages.

**Style:** MLA Style  **Sources: 5-7 from individual research (database and library sources only, or by approval)**

**Goals for this Unit:**

Gain an understanding of:

1. Analyzing, evaluating, and applying elements of Argument;
2. Using synthesis to help support claims;
3. Developing a thesis statement;
4. How social class is discussed in a variety of texts.