

## D.R.I.E. Essay on Lynching in America

This assignment is an adaptation of a method for touring Civil Rights monuments created by Professor Evelyn Simien's (University of Connecticut). The **D.R.I.E. (Describe, React, Interpret and Evaluate) Essays** are designed to inspire critical thinking, reflection and reaction while exposing students to the wealth of information and resources available on the web. Students will learn to view websites critically as well as navigate them successfully.

### Instructions:

Based on Paul and Elder's, *Critical Thinking: Concepts and Tools*, pp. 3-5, 8-10.

- Use the Analytical Essay Basic Outline or Argument Essay to help construct your paper. The analytical approach focuses on interpretation with evidence to substantiate your claims; while the argument approach focuses on taking a stand (a position) with evidence to substantiate your claims.
- Use the steps below to incorporate both:
  1. Peruse the **Without Sanctuary websites**
    - YouTube:<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W1DB-bDXe6o> or
    - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WphcZODVuuc>and designated websites with the designated readings and course texts. Tips for critical exploration of websites.
  2. DESCRIBE what you see, REACT to what you see, INTERPRET what you see and EVALUATE what you see. Focus things like:
    - a) Visual appeal and substantive content;
    - b) Type and adequacy of information provided;
    - c) Possible biases in the information provided;
    - d) Adequacy of links to other sources (if applicable); and
    - e) Overall usefulness to the Internet community.
  3. Prepare a D.R.I.E. (Describe, React, Interpret and Evaluate) Essay.

### Focus on the issue of "Lynching in America."

The essay must focus on the **Without Sanctuary** websites and the other materials. Be sure to provide YOUR:

- a) **Description of lynching.** Explain the controversy. What is the definition of lynching found in the assigned readings?
  - Use Ida B. Well's article on "Lynch Law in America" (provides historical, economic, racism/sexism context) – [<http://etc.usf.edu/lit2go/185/civil-rights->

and-conflict-in-the-united-states-selected-speeches/4375/speech-on-lynch-law-in-america-given-by-ida-b-wells-in-chicago-illinois-january-1900/];

- Use the poem/song, "Strange Fruit" (popular music, culture context) – BELOW;
- What do these pieces reveal about America or race relations in their messages? Do you agree? Why or why not? Give details, examples.

- b) **Reaction to lynching.** Clearly state an opinion and make assertions and support them;
- c) **Interpretation of lynching** in the development of American democracy. Argue directly for your chosen position about lynching in America using the readings/sources as evidence, and
- d) **Evaluation of the materials.** Make connections or inferences from the course themes (i.e. universal freedom, equality, power, self-determination, linked fate, minority-majority coalitions). Use the materials to ground your thesis or position), then
- e) **Provide "Statement of Discovery" on lynching.** For example: What can we learn from examining lynching in America? What was discovered about the value of examining the issue and its relationship to the course them or real world? What deep and thought-provoking questions does the issue raise? How can you connect this issue and its themes to contemporary issues?

4. You MUST use the designated course readings and lectures to support your position. You may bring in additional materials (found under WEB LINKS on BLACKBOARD) as well. **Please refrain from using the Internet dictionary or unsubstantiated sites.**

**Additional assigned readings or sources:**

- a) Equal Justice Initiative [www.eji.org]: [<http://eji.org/sites/default/files/lynching-in-america-second-edition-summary.pdf>]. Lynching in America reports & databases:
  - Lynching in America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror [<http://eji.org/sites/default/files/lynching-in-america-second-edition-summary.pdf>]
  - Lynching in America: Supplement-Lynchings By County [<http://eji.org/sites/default/files/lynching-in-america-second-edition-supplement-by-county.pdf>]
  - Lynching in America: Targeting Black Veterans [<http://eji.org/sites/default/files/lynching-in-america-targeting-black-veterans.pdf>]
- b) W.E.B. DuBois: "Of the Dawn of Freedom" in *The Souls of Black Folks* (1903); *Gift of Black Folk*, Chapter 4 - "The Emancipation of Democracy" & Chapter - "The Reconstruction of Freedom" (Found under course DOCUMENTS).
- c) The Poem/Song Lyrics: "Strange Fruit." The original lyrics for the poem/song , "Strange Fruit" are below for your convenience:

## Strange Fruit

*Performed by Billie Holiday, 1939.*

*Lyrics by Lewis Allen, 1939.*

*Poem by Abel Meeropol, circa 1930s*

Southern trees bear strange fruit,  
Blood on the leaves and blood at the root,  
Black bodies swinging in the southern breeze,  
Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees.  
Pastoral scene of the gallant south,  
The bulging eyes and the twisted mouth,  
Scent of magnolias, sweet and fresh,  
Then the sudden smell of burning flesh.  
Here is fruit for the crows to pluck,  
For the rain to gather, for the wind to suck,  
For the sun to rot, for the trees to drop,  
Here is a strange and bitter crop.

5. Assignment must be typed and double-spaced in a 10- to 12-point font with 1-inch margins. No handwritten essays accepted. Use APA format with in-text parenthetical references/citations. The "References" page at end should include all the documents used in the assignment. Essay should be 4-5 pages maximum.
6. NO MAKE-UPS for missed assignment or due date.