Biographical Research Essay

“Read no history: nothing but biography, for that is life without theory.”
- Benjamin Disraeli

Introduction
Disraeli urged readers to consume biography because it shows people, hence, the human condition as it actually is, unvarnished with the vagaries of what we would like life to be.

“There is no psychology; there is only biography and autobiography.”
- Thomas Szasz

Speaking of psychology, Abraham Maslow didn’t create the Hierarchy of Human Needs to instruct people on how to live a good life. Rather, he examined people as they are; as they lived their lives, and fashioned the theory to explain his observations.

Maslow studied Albert Einstein, Jane Addams, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Frederick Douglass rather than mentally ill or neurotic people. According to Maslow "the study of crippled, stunted, immature, and unhealthy specimens can yield only a cripple psychology and a cripple philosophy."

Maslow observed that “actualized” people tended to exhibit one or more traits which he called “Being Values,” or, more simply “B-Values.”

“Whereas fiction is a continual discovery of what one wants to say, what one feels, what one means, and is, in that sense, a performance art, biography requires different skills - research and organization.”
- Edmund White

Research Topic
For your research essay, you will investigate the life of a person who history regards as having lived a life worth living; someone who has made a significant contribution to the world. You have selected and read a full-length book about his or her life.

Next, you will spend two weeks in the library, learning about the research process and to conduct research on your topic, beginning Monday, February 24. Mrs. Kois will provide instruction and support as you progress through several steps and meet several “mini-deadlines” along the course of your project.

But always remember: You will be given class time to work on this project, but you CANNOT expect to be able to complete all of your work in class! All of the research resources and methods are available to you via an internet browser, meaning that you do not need to be in class, or even in school to conduct research and complete this project successfully.

Your Task
You will write a five paragraph research paper using correct MLA style, including a Works Cited page.

You will develop an original thesis statement about your subject, incorporating three of Maslow’s B-Values as your three support areas (body paragraphs). Your research paper will combine information
from a full length biography (book) and other research conducted through a variety of online and/or other resources.

Your paper must contain at least five resources, including the book. The other four sources may be any combination of print or web, but may not include Wikipedia! All sources must be cited correctly, i.e., correct MLA format.

The assignment implies that the subject of your research has reached the actualization stage of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Human Needs; only such people would exhibit Maslow’s B-Values.

**Mini-Deadlines**
Mini-deadlines have been established to help keep you on task. Missing one mini-deadline sets you up for missing the next and then the next, etc. Please pay careful attention to these dates:

- **Friday, February 14** Calendar Sign-off, student AND parent signatures beginning of class (7)
- **Sunday, February 23** Complete reading of Biography and Reading Notes
- **Monday, February 24** Biography Reading Notes Packet due at the beginning of lab (6)
- **Thursday, February 27** Working Bibliography (min 5 sources) by the end of class (7)
- **Tuesday, March 3** 5 Notecards before the beginning of class (7)
- **Tuesday, March 3** Working Outline by the end of class (7)
- **Thursday, March 5** 20 Notecards by the end of class (7)
- **Monday, March 9** Final Outline due by the end of lab (6)
- **Tuesday, March 10** Works Cited page by the end of class (7)
- **Monday, March 16** First Draft uploaded to Turnitin.com before the beginning of lab (6)
- **Monday, March 16** Printed copy of First Draft for guided editing at the beginning of lab (6)
- **Wednesday, March 18** Final Draft by the end of class (7)

All dates are subject to change with prior notice.

**IMPORTANT** These dates indicate “mini-deadlines” for which you will receive a Homework or Class Participation grade (except Final Draft, due March 18). The grades for the mini-deadlines indicate that you have completed the assignment and submitted it by the due date. Missed deadlines result in grades of 0% for that respective component. No credit will be awarded for work turned in after any deadline.

If you have an Excused Absence on a deadline date, then the deadline will be extended to the next day you return to school.

**MLA Formatting**
Please consult the Purdue University OWL MLA 2009 pages online at http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/