

Ishmael Essay Prompts

Due: Friday, April 27th

Value: Test grade

Directions: Respond to ONE of the following prompts. Write a formal essay in which you analyze *Ishmael* and topics from AP European History. You will also express your own views. You should quote the text like you would a novel for a literary analysis essay. I expect to see direct quotes from the text pertaining to your prompt. The commentary for those quotes should, when appropriate, connect *Ishmael* to topics we studied in class. Feel free to quote primary sources from the readings in class. Any quotes within your essay should have internal citations. Your commentary should also include, when appropriate, your view on the topic being discussed.

Length: 4 – 5 pages + an additional Works Cited page.

Works Cited: Provide information for *Ishmael* and any other sources cited within the essay.

Submission: You will submit a hard-copy in class and submit a digital copy to turnitin.com

Prompt 1 – Ideology

According to *Ishmael*, what is the ideology of modern, industrial society? Discuss what an ideology is, and how it gets perpetuated. Why does *Ishmael* criticize this ideology? What is wrong with it? What ideologies, philosophies, and/or worldviews does *Ishmael* draw on to improve the future?

Prompt 2 – Takers

According to *Ishmael*, who are the Takers and how do they live? How *can* the idea of Takers and Leavers be used to explain and analyze European history? You might discuss European exploration, colonialism, imperialism, and/ or the globalization of industrialism. Do *you* agree that the Europeans are Takers? Why or why not? If so, does that make the Europeans “villains” within history? Why or why not?

Prompt 3 – Human Nature

According to *Ishmael*, what is human nature? How does this differ from conceptions of human nature that we studied in class (religious and/or secular)? What do *you* think about human nature? Your discussion should be in dialogue with *Ishmael* and other philosophies and/or theologies studied in class. Do you agree or disagree with *Ishmael* that we are capable of creating a paradise or utopia? Explain.

Prompt 4 – Humanism

How is the Taker lifestyle a form of humanism? How does *Ishmael* challenge humanism and possibly call humans to rethink their position within the natural world? What does he mean when he says that “man belongs to the world”? Do you agree or disagree with *Ishmael*? How does *Ishmael*’s critique of human civilization challenge our understanding of progress?

Prompt 5 – Environmentalism

How do environmentalists attempt to respond to *Ishmael*’s concerns? What is the challenge facing environmentalists in modern, industrial societies such as the United States or China? Do you agree with *Ishmael* that modern, industrial society is a prison? How should we respond to *Ishmael* if we agree with his diagnosis?