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[](http://www.google.com/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=images&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwjk0IK5wrbKAhWBlYMKHc6WCZAQjRwIBw&url=http://www.ethos3.com/2015/08/presentation-design-tips-from-the-prezi-team/&psig=AFQjCNERECqKSJ01WAXSG4iwPIIkjqX4Zg&ust=1453314890448572)

**Collaborative Group Projects for Readings in Composition:**

***3 Modules / 3 Groups***

**PART ONE: OVERVIEW**

***Class Text: The Norton Reader, 14th Edition***

Throughout the semester, students will be arranged into three groups (A/B/C) and they will give three presentations with their group. These three presentations for each module will occur in single class meetings, with time for each group distributed equally. The term “Group Modules” simply refers to the broad theme around which the works selected from the book relate in each of the three themed modules, and all three groups within each module will be related by that theme. Then the readings assigned to each group (within each module) will all have both obvious and not-so-obvious relatable content amongst the essays within them. Such "relatable content" in Module 1 is quite easy to ascertain, frankly, because it is explicit and fairly obvious to see; However, the relatable content in modules 2 and 3 become more increasingly challenging, more implicit, and less obvious to see on the surface.

G**roups have particular tasks to complete—both individually and as a group collectively—in order to earn all the possible points that are available for each module**. The final "group grade" for each presentation will be assigned to all group members equally, while the "individual written responses" will be graded individually. The group and individual components to these projects combine to give each student their own distinct grand total of points for these assignments at the end of the semester.

**Regarding the length and/or the development of the individual responses:** all group members, regardless of the question(s) assigned to them by the group, are expected to give a wholehearted written response to such questions! In other words, no question on the list gives a "pass" for not writing a fully-developed written response to it.

**VERY IMPORTANT: While groups are expected to divide the “tasks” (or questions) among group members, the unique collection of essays assigned to each group must ABSOLUTELY NOT TO BE DIVIDED, as I expect ALL GROUP MEMBERS TO BE THOROUGHLY FAMILIAR WITH ALL READINGS ASSIGNED TO THEIR GROUP LETTER ! Not doing so will result in a lower grade for the group, plus added deductions for the non-participating group member. Keep in mind that it is always obvious to me on presentation days who did and did not read/view the required material.** In fact, none of the various tasks/questions I list on this “Group Module Guidelines” handout can even be addressed correctly if ALL the essays/video assigned to the group are not in mind as you approach each task/question (they are designed to be viewed collectively—as a whole).

**The individual students who are assigned particular tasks from the “Group Module Guidelines” then have three things to do with their results in the course of these projects** (*btw:* ***ALL*** *group members should have tasks to complete*)**:** **1.** ***Write*** their detailed and thorough answers/rationale in a written document on Canvas; **2.** ***Summarize/condense*** their findings into brief, presentable bullet points for the group Prezi; and **3.** ***Verbally present*** their assigned tasks via slides on the Prezi WITHOUT READING SLIDES VERBATIM (not from the individual written responses nor from long blocks of text in the Prezi slides). FYI: I do not consider reading aloud from large blocks of text pasted and forced into slides as a valid means of delivering a presentation! Doing so will result in significant point deductions for the whole group, so be aware of what your fellow team members are planning to present. For that matter, all group members should be fully aware of everything their fellow group members are planning to do, since everyone's group grade depends on it.

**Again, all tasks listed in the “Prezi Guidelines” need to be distributed among group members BY group members** (I will not do that for you). And, while **I do not intend to “micro-manage”** the groups and/or the distribution of tasks, I will strongly encourage groups to recognize the importance and the work involved with **putting the Prezi together** for the group member who does so, and consider that work in the distribution of other tasks—since theirs is already a big chunk (although, the person who volunteers for this is likely someone who, like me, enjoys working with Prezi).

***On or before the actual presentation days, I need a valid/active link to the Prezi sent to me via email by ONE GROUP MEMBER (NO CREDIT will be given to a group that does not submit the link).***

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\* While it is my ideal goal to assign all group members the same grade, and I see this ideal work out most of the time without a hitch, the reality of some group scenarios—unfortunately—is that slackers like to take advantage of this group grading structure and rely on the hard-working group members’ efforts to earn their grade for them. Naturally, the hard-working students don’t like to see this happen and neither do I! Therefore, while groups are assigned a group grade, I reserve the right to make deductions to any student’s grade for a module based upon feedback I receive from their fellow group members who will always address me in confidentiality via email. In the unfortunate event that a group member decides not to participate, this policy of other group members informing me in writing works quite effectively to support my decision to lower scores or even remove members from groups.

Group Module Guidelines (Part Two) on Following Page

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**PART TWO:**

**SPECIFIC GUIDELINES/QUESTIONS GROUPS ASSIGN TO MEMBERS**

**Group Module Guidelines**

It is expected that groups will respond to ALL the “tasks” (questions) listed below. Naturally, this group project will involve dividing these questions in the list among group members. In terms of how much each group member contributes, or which particular tasks & questions each group member takes-on, I’ll leave that to you. In general, I’ve found that a spirit of equity quickly emerges in these modules and the division of tasks generally seems to be fair and agreed upon by all group members—given the fact that all group members receive the same group grade for the assignment! This reality should encourage your group to look for members’ strengths, in terms of skills or insights into specific questions, instead of their weaknesses. Also, a strength is also a strong desire to answer a particular question!

**As the project overview clearly explains, group members are expected to divide the tasks/questions listed below, but DO NOT DIVIDE THE READINGS (and Video) AMONG GROUP MEMBERS.**  **Again, ALL GROUP MEMBERS ARE REQUIRED TO KNOW ALL THE MATERIAL ASSIGNED TO THEIR GROUP.**

Questions

**I. *Who* Did You Read or View? Name all the authors in your grouping, along with a brief summary of their work.** This opening question is very important because if it is done sloppily, then your classmates--who have not read the same assigned works--won't have any idea what the readings are about. This lack of clarity in the first question will subsequently affect all of the following questions in the list! The person who takes-on this question needs to be **accurate, specific, and concise**. In other words, he/she needs to have **SHARP PRECISION and an ECONOMY OF WORDS** while also providing enough through detail for audience members to really seee what these works are about. Balancing these seemingly opposite skills is what makes this question a challenge, so select the right person for the task! Oh, and to add another skill to the mix, the person who kicks-off your group's presentation should have energy and **ENTHUSIASM**. ***Hint for success:*** It’s nice on the Prezi to find images of the authors/speakers to paste on your Prezi, as it makes the works more human and relatable to your peers who haven’t seen/read them!

**II. *What* Ideological OR Philosophical OR Political OR Spiritual Content Emerges in the Works?** In this question, you are examining ***ideas and beliefs*** essentially that stand out *within* the works—which tend to be harder to nail-down with absolute certainty than concrete facts *about* the works (as question #1 addresses)! Like a lawyer, you will need to "make your case" for the associations you see, so aim to build a strong case. Don’t feel compelled to force all the categories involved with this question into every work, or even to use all of them for that matter (its far more qualitative than quantitative)! Be selective, as the works themselves dictate which categories above should be discussed. Quality and depth of the association is what really matters here—not trying to make them all apply! The key to this question is a skill called INFERENCE, which is defined as having the ability to "make assumptions about the unknown based upon the known". Strength in this area is marked by a keen ability to think critically and independently! It is the mark of genuine scholarship, and it resides in the realm of the abstract as opposed to the realm of the concrete*! In other words, do not volunteer for this question if you are someone who depends solely upon getting the right answers in bubble-filling exams to gauge your understanding of a subject!*

**NOTE: *Numbers III and IV below represent two categories in the “DSRP” model for systems thinking (Distinctions, Systems, Relationships, Perspectives) developed by Dr. Derek Cabrera. We are applying "Distinctions" and "Relationships" to these modules because they work effectively. For more on this approach, view Dr. Cabrera’s TED talk entitled “How Thinking Works” in the Canvas Media Gallery. Like all the tasks/questions listed on this handout, the only way to effectively answer them is when you view all the readings as a collected whole. In other words, they all need to be in view and well understood before you can begin to address these two DSRP questions especially!* So, as you approach the two DSRP questions below (Distinctions and Relationships), remember that Cabrera designed this model for systems thinking with ALL academic disciplines in mind and not exclusively for an English class with readings to analyze--*Systems Thinking is much larger than that!***

**III. Distinctions – Identifying what specifically distinguishes the works and ideas within the works from one-another.** This means making sharp distinctions between the works themselves, the authors, and the many ideas embedded within the works. As a rule, the more subtle (less obvious) the distinction, the more significant is its value as a discovery. While you may, for example, say that one author is a man and the other author is a woman, that is a very obvious distinction. However, if you identify **an idea, or concept,** in each essay that may appear to be similar between two or more works, yet you point out how it is distinct from the other because of specific reasons you can explain, then that’s an important distinction to find!

**IV. Relationships – *What* Connects the Works? What parallels, or connections, do you see among the works you’ve seen/read?** What points of agreement or disagreement do they have on the surface (explicitly stated)? What about beneath the surface (implied)? Do you see any “common denominators” running through any combination of these readings? Like distinctions, the more valuable finds will be those similarities that are not as obvious! For this section, think in terms of the shaded section of a Venn Diagram. Think creatively and explain your rationale for the connections you make. **NOTE:** I have arranged these groupings of works based upon things I see as potential for connectivity; I am not following some sort of a pre-set template or master key of associations—with “correct” things to find. This means I am both hoping you might find and discuss some of the things I see AND that you will find lots of things that remain to be seen!

**Note:** *When writing or talking about questions III and IV above, the people (or person) who take these questions should never make isolated statements about a single work! Every statement and/or every point made should reference multiple works to demonstrate either relationships or distinctions between them.*

**V. What common or practical problems or issues do the works address?** Are they **social issues? individual/psychological issues?** To what degree do the authors of these works attempt to either identify **causes** or provide **solutions** to such problems/issues? Personally, do you agree with the author's explanation of causes or with his or her proposed solutions if either of these are provided in the works? Once you've thoroughly addressed the previous questions regarding problems/issues, can you see them grouped into larger clusters or categories? If so, what might those categories be?

**VI.** **Focusing solely on the writing itself (and *not* on all of the interpretive aspects discussed up to this point), simply talk about the authors' writing styles!** This question is all about the "how" as opposed to the "what" of the essays--"how" they are written as opposed to "what" they say. And as an objective point of reference beyond your own personal/subjective feelings regarding the authors' writing styles, the individual who answers this question will also need to reference any credible written sources to support their assessments--be they positive or negative assessments (books websites, etc). I will be looking for specific "jargon" that English teachers use often when we talk about writing--such as voice, pacing, examples, description, development, etc.

**VII.** ***What*** **Motion Pictures, Works of Visual Art/Music, or Other Literary Works (Novels, Poems, Plays) Do You Associate with These Assigned Readings/Video?** What is required in this seemingly easy task/question is to find that work of art, film, or song that speaks to several (ideally ALL) of the works your group is assigned on some level. Again, keeping ALL works in the set at the forefront of your mind is the goal! By contrast, selecting a film or a song that speaks to only one of the essays really misses one of the key goals of this project—which is to develop ***systems thinking*** skills! For example, a very poor way of addressing this question/task would be to generate a list of pairs, with one motion picture paired with one reading. On the other hand, a fantastic way of addressing this question/task would be to have one film (at most two films) in which you are able to make a strong case for associations between it and several readings! See the difference?

**VIII. Lastly, discuss what your group members’ responses were to the various works.** Summarize these responses, or group them, as opposed to exhaustively going through all group members’ thoughts on all readings/media. Who in your group agreed or disagreed with which authors, and WHY? Be specific, but not so thorough on this question that you spend more time than necessary with it! **NOTE:** This question needs to be EXTREMELY SUMMARIZED/CONDENSED for the verbal presentation. The person answering it needs to be thorough in his/her written response (and the Prezi slide can also contain more details than time will allow to discuss).

**PART THREE:**

**THE READINGS, DIVIDED INTO THREE MODULES AND ASSIGNED TO LETTERS A,B, and C**

**1301** **Group** **Reading Assignments:**

From: ***The Norton Reader, 14th Edition***

**MODULE 1: *Learning Life Takes a Variety of Forms***

**\* Groups: Give Your Presentation a Unique Title!**

**Group A – Didion "On Going Home" (1); Lee "Coming Home Again" (3); Bechdel from "Fun House" (12); Sanders "Under the Influence" (87); Tobin "Here Everything is Possible" (286)**

**Group B** – **Muir "A Wind Storm in the Forests" (529); Abbey "The Great American Desert" (535); Stegner "Wilderness Letter" (544); Cronon "The Trouble with the Wilderness" (550); Momaday "The Way to Rainy Mountain" (136)**

**Group C –**  **Franklin "Working at Wendy's" (80); Rose "Blue Collar Brilliance" (449); Eighner "On Dumpster Diving" (55); Wiewiora "This is Tossing" (316)**

**MODULE 2: *The 21st Century: What a Wonderful Time to Be Alive (Or Is It?)***

**\* Groups: Give Your Presentation a Unique Title!**

**Group A –McGonigal "Be a Gamer, Save the World" (396); Bissell: "Extra Lives: Why Video Games Matter" (214); Raja "Is Coding the New Literacy?" (600); Vogelstein "And Then Steve Said, 'Let There Be an iPhone" (617)**

**Group B –** **Kreider "The Busy Trap" (380); "Stuff is Not Salvation" by Anna Quindlen (378); Mitford "Behind the Formaldehyde Curtain" (238); McKibben "The Case for Single-Child Families" (214)**

**Group C –Biss "Time and Distance Overcome" (581); Gladwell "Java Man" (232); Newman "To Siri with Love" (628); Sontag "A Century of Cinema" (927)**

***PLUS: All groups must select a TED Talk or a spoken word poem on a subject directly related to BOTH the theme of module two AND the specific ideas that emerge from your group’s particular focus! You then need to add the video to your readings and treat it just like a written text in terms of incorporating it (just like you did with the additional reading in Module One). Note: I evaluate the quality of your media selection, especially regarding the way in which it connects to your groups’ focus! I strongly recommend the following names: Sherry Turkle (TED), Marshall Jones “Touchscreen” (Poem via YouTube), Prince Ea. “Can We Auto Correct Humanity?” (poem via YouTube), Peter Theil ( various talks by him available on YouTube), or Ray Kurzweil (anything by him via YouTube). Also, no more than ONE group can use the same media example ; the group who reports their selection to me soonest claims it! Finally, DO NOT CONFUSE THIS REQUIREMENT WITH QUESTION #7 IN YOUR LIST OF TASKS/QUESTIONS.***

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**MODULE 3: *Responsibility is a Many Splendid Thing!***

**\* Groups: Give Your Presentation a Unique Title!**

**Group A – Ephron "The Boston Photographs" (716); Fussell "Thank God for the Atom Bomb" (722); Eagleman "The Brain on Trial" (735); Freedman "Lies, Damned Lies, and Medical Science" (850)**

**Group B –**  **Pollan "The Animal's Place" (681); Regan "The Case for Animal Rights" (670); Nestle "Utopian dream: A New Farm Bill" (274); Barber "What Farm-to-Table Got Wrong" (400)**

**Group C –** **Woolf "A Room of One's Own" (904); Stanton "Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions" (784); Brooks "The Gender Gap at School" (390); Quindlen "Between the Sexes, a Great Divide" (164)**

***PLUS . . . Just Like Module #1. . .***

***EVERYONE (all groups) need to read and incorporate into their assigned group ONE of the following three readings:*  *"The Morals of the Prince" by Niccolo Machiavelli (763) OR "Shooting An Elephant" by George Orwell (750). This additional reading (making the total number of readings six for each group) simply gets added and applied to the set. In the intro slide for each group (slide #1), your first presenter needs to provide the group's reasoning for choosing one over the other two (and, needless to say, essay length is not a valid reason).***