

Optimism

meets

Pessimism

I can see clearly now the rain is gone
I can see all obstacles in my way
Gone are the dark clouds that had me down
It's gonna be a bright
bright
sun shiny day

-Johnny Nash

Your servant here, he has been told
to say it clear, to say it cold:
It's over, it ain't going
any further.
And now the wheels of heaven stop
you feel the devil's riding crop
Get ready for the future:
it is murder.

-Leonard Cohen

Essay #1 “Confronting the New Misanthropy”

I am assigning this ungraded first essay just so I can get a sense of your writing abilities at the beginning of the term. You will get 10 points of credit just for handing the essay in (and it *is* required) but otherwise it *will not be graded*. Just do your best!

This essay also gives you the chance to do some thinking about the kinds of issues we will be focusing on this semester.

What to do

Please carefully read the attached essay “Confronting the New Misanthropy.” The essay makes a number of points that we will return to throughout the semester as we discuss some pretty pessimistic visions of the future and some optimistic alternatives.

In a 4-5 page essay, please identify Furedi’s *main point*, discuss whether or not you agree with this point, and explain why.

How to do it

Basic instructions:

- In your response, show that you have understood Furedi’s essay by summarizing his major claim and explaining how he tries to prove this claim.
- Your thesis should simply state whether you agree with Furedi or not—you may also include a major reason why.
- You may use your own experience to discuss your thesis, but please do not spend the entire essay on this; focus on responding to the claims in the article.
- Include at least **two quotations** from the article using correct quote format to the best of your ability
- Use fluent sentences and clearly focused paragraphs. Proofread to the best of your ability.
- Please do not write “the five paragraph essay.” Make your thesis one major point, not three. (If you don’t know what I’m talking about, don’t worry about it, but we will need to meet to discuss it soon.).

Some suggestions:

- You might want to put your summary of his main point in your introductory paragraph, followed by your thesis.
- This is college level reading, so keep a dictionary handy. Read through the article but circle any unfamiliar words and look them up afterwards. You should also mark key passages and keep the purpose of the assignment in mind while reading.
- Explain whether you agree or disagree by using some quotes from Furedi. Think about his tone (does he seem reasonable or extreme?) his evidence (is there enough of it?) or just whether you've noticed some of the same things.