

Psych II Project 1

The goal is to take something that you have learned in this class and go further with it in a way that is meaningful to you. The most important part of this project is selecting what you want to do. You want to select a direction that you are genuinely excited about and that gives you the opportunity to put your personal stamp on the material. With this in mind, I have created the choices below; however, if you have a different idea that you think is better for you, run it by me; there is a good chance that I will be fine with it.

1. Self-Analysis Paper

Write a paper. Use a theory or pieces of several theories to make important discoveries about your own thinking, behavior, and experience. Write this analysis in the third person, from the perspective of a therapist, or perhaps a close friend. The analysis should include not only understanding who you currently are and where you are at, but what you need to do to progress towards greater psychological health. Possible frameworks:

- a. The “Well-Adjusted CCHS teenager”
- b. Humanistic Analysis
- c. An Adolescent Theory of Development (Transition, Cognitive Development, Identity).

NOTE: Use my question sets from journals to guide you in terms of the specific questions you should be thinking about and answering for each of these.

Make sure that you:

- Provide lots of concrete, specific examples from your life - specific experiences, stories, specific behaviors and thought patterns, etc. Spend the time to support your observations with evidence.
- Start your paper with a story, written in an engaging and interesting fashion – a real-life experience that gets the reader engaged and highlights an important piece of your analysis.

If you would like to analyze another person, rather than yourself, go ahead. If you do this, respect the confidentiality of your subject.

2. Movie Analysis – Use a theory or pieces of several theories to analyze a character or characters from a movie. Here are some movies that would certainly work based on the theories we have discussed:

- Good Will Hunting
- Castaway
- The Breakfast Club
- Mean Girls
- Juno
- Rushmore
- The Way Way Back

(Note – the first two really fit with the Humanistic Perspective; the others work better with theories of Adolescent development)

Make sure to support your psychological insights into the character(s) with lots of specific events and quotations from the movie. Also, start your paper with an engaging description of a moment from the movie that highlights one or several of your insights into the character.

3. Create an ultimate high school, based on one of the theories we have discussed, or on ideas from several theories. Feel free to think way outside the box here; your school does not have to look or function in any way like our present school, as long as you can justify your ideas using concepts that you have learned. This should be a paper, but can also include visual diagrams, of the lay out of the school and/or specific physical aspects of the learning environment. You could also create a typical student schedule, or a list of requirements all students must meet, etc. Like the self-analysis, it might be helpful to pick a theoretical framework for your school. Humanistic - If the most important thing for you is to move up the hierarchy of needs and closer to self-actualization, what sort of high school would help students accomplish this? Or, if the goal is to help you construct an identity in the Eriksonian sense of the word, what sort of school would help you? Etc.

Make sure to justify your ideas using concepts and theories learned in the course. Also make sure that you are specific and concrete in your description of what the school would look like and how it would operate.

4. Critique our school – What is wrong about this school, and/or what is right about this school, based on what you have learned so far in this course? Pick a few specific characteristics of this school and the way it operates, and use concepts from the course to support your opinion about these characteristics. For those aspects of the school that you feel are problematic, make sure to provide solutions, explaining how things could be done better. Again, make sure to justify your solutions using concepts that you have learned in this course. You may (or may not) want to use one particular theory as the basis of your criticism – so, for example, based on the hierarchy of needs, or based on Erikson's theory of adolescence, what is good about our school and the way it operates, and what needs to be changed?

Like choices 1 and 2, you should start with an engaging story about your experience at this school, or a typical experience at this school, that highlights one or several points that you will make over the course of your paper. Throughout your paper, you should use specific experiences from your life and experience at this school to support your insights.

5. Letter to a Middle Schooler - Write a letter to your (real or fictional) middle school brother or sister. Give your sibling concrete advice about how to proceed through their adolescent years, using concepts learned in this course to justify

the advice that you give. You should also use specific experiences from your life to support your insights.

6. Artistic Expression – Rather than write a paper, create a work of art (painting, piece of music, etc.) that accomplishes one of the above choices, and/or captures the predicament / struggle / psychological condition of the CCHS teenager (or teenagers anywhere). Your artwork of course should be inspired by material learned in this course. Accompany your artwork with a 1-2 page paper explaining what you were hoping to accomplish / communicate through your artwork, and how your work is inspired by and is a demonstration of ideas learned in this course.
7. Psychopath Research Paper - Do some research on psychopaths. Read and discuss 5-8 articles from reputable sources that discuss the causes, behavior patterns, and treatment of psychopathy. Compare and contrast this new information with what you have already learned about psychopaths in this class. Like the article we read on psychopaths, start your paper with a real-life interesting and engaging story that highlights points you will make later in the paper (which should not be that hard considering the fact that you are writing a paper about psychopaths).

Papers should be a minimum of 4 pages in length, size 12 font, 1-inch margins, and double-spaced. This is *bare* minimum; to do a really good job with any of these choices, your paper most likely needs to be longer.

What am I looking for? I am looking for a well-written, well-organized paper (if you are writing a paper) that demonstrates creativity, depth of insight, thoughtfulness, sincerity, and a nuanced understanding of the material. Your insights should be supported through numerous specific examples.