Core Humanities: A Survival Guide
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When it comes to essays for Core Humanities, even the most literature-inclined students may struggle to write one of the many papers assigned in CH 201, 202, and 203. The two main issues that students face in Core Humanities classes are writing a thesis and meeting a word count. Here, we will address these issues in depth, and hopefully guide you towards success in Core Humanities.

Writing a Thesis
When writing a Core Humanities essay, the thesis statement may be overlooked. Students often scrawl it down absentmindedly and then disregard it. However, this statement is the most important sentence in your essay. It provides insight into the topic while simultaneously answering the question provided.

Each sentence that you write in the body of your essay must possess a link to the thesis, so it is crucial to have a strong thesis to relate back to. If this sounds daunting, remember that this statement is simply your answer to the question your teacher is asking in the prompt.

So, how do you write an effective thesis statement?
- First, look at the prompt and identify what question(s) the teacher is asking.
- Mentally decide what stance you will take on this particular question.
  - i.e. Answer the question in your head.
- Finally, write down your answer to the question. Be concise, but ensure that every component of the question is answered.

Example:
If you are still having trouble figuring out how to write that perfect thesis statement, don’t worry. Examples are a CH student’s best friend, so below is a prompt and thesis from a CH 202 class at the University of Nevada, Reno.

In many ways, Christianity is different from the other religions we’ve discussed thus far, in certain ways it is similar. Seek out the similarities between Christianity and any polytheistic religious movement we’ve studied so far.

To build a thesis that answers the question entirely, we must identify each similarity we have found between the two religions. We do not need to go into detail; we’ll save that for the essay. But we still need to concisely and clearly establish the overarching similarity that we will write about. So how would we answer the above prompt?

Possible Thesis:

While varying in many aspects, the Mesopotamian and Christian religions find common ground in their utilization of morality as a basis for their principles of behavior.
So why is this an effective thesis? Most importantly, this statement fully answers the prompt and gives insight into what the essay is about. The reader can safely assume that the body of the essay will explain how utilization of morality brings these two religions together. Further, this thesis is concise and does not include excess information.

**Meeting the Word Count**

When it comes to meeting the word count, there are a few different scenarios that you may face. The first is being less than 100 words from the word count.

**Less than 150**

- In this case, it may not be necessary to add a completely new idea to your essay. Read carefully through your essay, and observe whether any examples could use more explanation or a link to the thesis.
- See if an existing paragraph could use more textual support, and find a quote to help support it. Make sure your introduction has enough detail to adequately summarize your essay.
- Rid your essay of contractions (don’t, didn’t, won’t) and replace them with their non-abbreviated alternative (do not, did not, will not)
- This may only get you a few extra words, but it is also proper writing etiquette to avoid using contractions when possible

**150 to 500**

- Here, you are going to have to add a new idea to your essay
- Express this idea in paragraph form, and make sure that you are using this space to provide further support to your thesis
- Remember that you must add this new idea to your prompt!

**More than 500**

- It is common to be in this position when writing essays over 2,000 words.
- You are going to have to return to your outline and incorporate a few new ideas
- Again, remember to put these into your thesis as well
- If you cannot find any more information and you are still more than 500 words below the mark, you may have to change the direction of your thesis. Even if you may not agree with the new direction of the thesis, it may have more evidence to support its cause.

Hopefully, with the help of this guide, you will become more confident in your responses to the many CH essays you will encounter.

Special thanks to professor Joseph Taglieber for providing the prompt used in the example.