

Personal Essay (Staple this page to the front of your essay)

Student Name: _____

Paper 1: **Personal Essay** (taken from page 27 of *Writing and Community Action*)
“...question yourself and articulate what you believe...” (Deans 27)

Due Date: Check syllabus

Length: 500 words, minimum

Value: 5% of your final grade

Description: For this essay, select one of the following:

- A turning point in your ethical development.
- A meaningful event that you experienced while involved in community service.

Although you should keep the focus on your personal experience, the essay should speak to what readers can discover from your rendering of personal experience. The essay should be based on autobiographical narrative, develop a central tension and turn, and make use of literary devices such as description, setting, character, and figurative language.

Sources: None are required, but if you use any, you must document them properly, using MLA style. (See Hacker’s *Rules for Writers*.)

Writing Skills Evaluation	Excellent		Average	Weak	
	High	Low		High	Low
Quality of Thought	5	4	3	2	1
Recognition/examination of complex ideas Credible and logical support	Unified and strong control of content. Opinions and claims are well-supported. Ample evidence. Logic is maintained. Paper is ambitious and insightful.		Generally unified. Ideas are balanced. Opinions and claims are adequately supported and usually logical. Paper is ambitious but quality is inconsistent.	Little evidence of control of ideas. Ideas are not supported, or support is clichéd or illogical. Paper is not ambitious or insightful.	
Clarity of Purpose	5	4	3	2	1
Clear purpose Audience awareness	Positions are insightful and clear. Thesis is focused; intent is obvious. Clear sense of audience.		Positions are sound and understandable. Thesis is general; intent is evident. Somewhat aware of audience.	Lacks position on topics. Thesis may be absent or intent is unclear. Superficial. Little to no recognition of audience.	
Organization of Content	5	4	3	2	1
Arrangement Unity Coherence	Ideas are well connected through structural and linguistic transitions. Structure complements and completes content.		Some evidence of structural and linguistic transitions. Structure is generally adequate for the content.	Overall unity and coherence are flawed. Parts are poorly connected, and there is little evidence of planning or organization.	
Language and Style / Voice	5	4	3	2	1
Vocabulary Register Tone	Exhibits confident, skillful use of language. Uses a varied, accurate, and appropriate vocabulary. Sentences are purposefully designed and matched to content.		Exhibits adequate but inconsistent facility in the use of language. Uses generally appropriate vocabulary and varied sentences.	Displays little facility in the use of language. Uses limited vocabulary or inappropriate word choice. Sentences are basic. Paper may be repetitive or wordy.	
Mechanics	5	4	3	2	1
Grammar and usage Punctuation Spelling	Grammatical structures are well-chosen. No errors detract from meaning.		Grammatical structures carry the meaning forward, although readers notice occasional error(s).	Grammar errors are so obtrusive that readers are seriously distracted by them.	

Essays plagiarized or not written on the essay assignment will receive a score of zero.

TOTAL SCORE: _____ **COMMENTS:** _____