ENGL 2130

Spring 2015

Essay 1: *The Red Badge of Courage*

**DUE FEBRUARY 3 AT THE START OF YOUR CLASS--NO EXCEPTIONS**

You will need to closely read Stephen Crane’s *The Red Badge of Courage* and address **one** of the following topics fully. The essay must be a **minimum** of 750 words (to the **BOTTOM of page 3**), using Times New Roman 12 point font (this document uses this font and size), double-spaced, with 1 inch margins all around. Heading is to be at the **top left** of the page in **this format**:

First Name Last Name

ENGL 2130, Topic #(from below)

Mrs. Appelbaum

3 February 2015

**Any** use of source material, whether the novel itself or scholarly criticism, **must** be cited correctly in MLA format; deductions will be taken for incorrect format on this essay. This includes direct quotes, paraphrases, and summaries. Use course resources to verify correct format, and come to me with any questions. If you have technology challenges, stay after school to use computers, get a USB drive, or email your essay to me; get it done.

1. In Chapter 7 of Stephen Crane’s *The Red Badge of Courage,* the author compares the copse of trees where Henry Fleming finds the dead Union soldier to a chapel. The description of the site is full of religious imagery. What is the significance of these analogies? Discuss what Crane is implying about nature and about war in this brief chapter.
2. Stephen Crane’s *The Red Badge of Courage* tells the story of a young man testing his makeup in the crucible of war. the author lived in a way that indicated how much he valued such testing, exposing himself to extremes of danger and violence as a war correspondent. What is the outcome of the test pictured in the novel? What does Henry Fleming discovers about himself? Does he emerge from his first battle with a true picture of his character, or is he self-deceived? Support your conclusion with details from the novel.
3. Critic Richard Chase argued that the literary naturalism of Stephen Crane’s *The Red Badge of Courage* was influenced by Darwinism because it pictured man as an animal in conflict with other men and his environment. Do you agree with this assessment? Support your conclusion with specific quotations from the novel.
4. Discuss the use of irony in Stephen Crane’s *The Red Badge of Courage*. Give particular attention to the irony of the recorded thoughts of the protagonist. How do those thoughts, particularly his assessments of himself and those around him, differ from reality? What is Crane trying to communicate through these ironic descriptions of Henry Fleming’s mental processes?
5. At the end of Stephen Crane’s *The Red Badge of Courage,* Henry Fleming declares himself to be man. Do you consider the book to be a coming-of-age story (Bildungsroman)? Does Henry achieve manhood by the ways in which he changes over the course of the novel, or is he merely self-deceived? Does his definition of manhood correspond th that found in Scripture? Support your conclusion with details from the book.
6. Stephen Crane’s *The Red Badge of Courage* contains no mention of God beyond the use of His name in profanity, and indeed leaves no room for God within the bounds of the narrative despite the frequent use of religious imagery. What characteristics of the story reveal the author’s rejection of the Christianity in which he had been raised? Be sure your analysis goes deeper than the use of language and penetrates the worldview of the novel.
7. Toward the end of the 19th century, artists began to feel more and more alienated from the society around them. The art of the period expresses that alienation in a variety of ways. In literature, protagonists often feel so isolated from the society around them that they do little but engage in introspection. To what extent is this true of Stephen Crane’s *The Red Badge of Courage?* What does the author’s portrayal of Henry Fleming say about his view of the human dilemma and the absence of true human relationships?
8. What, according to Stephen Crane’s *The Red Badge of Courage*, is courage? How does one obtain it? How is it manifested? Why does war tend to draw it forth from those who think they lack it? Be sure to **incorporate** incidents and quotations from the novel in your discussion of the issue.