

Humanities 5  
Professor John Hoon Lee  
Spring 2015

Writing Assignment #1: Mill, Marx, and Wagner

Note: Evidence for your essay must be based only on the assigned texts.

1. According to Wagner, Marx, and Mill, what are the constraints on human freedom? What problems are they trying to solve and how do their views of freedom differ? Would Marx find Mill's view on freedom inadequate? Would Mill agree with Marx's view on what it means to be free? What about Wagner? If Mill and Marx attended a production of the Ring of the Nibelung, would they agree with Wagner's rendering of truly free individual? Using two of the following texts – Ring of the Nibelung, On Liberty, and The Communist Manifesto, compare or contrast your two authors' idea of freedom.

2. Let's pretend that you are the new opera director of the Bayreuth Festival and you want to stage a new and radical production of Wagner's Ring Cycle. Using Marx or Mill, write a thesis-based essay or a script re-interpreting the Ring of the Nibelung.

Note: If you wish to take on the script format, then you must get a clearance from your section teacher. Trust me, it's for your own good.

3. Our goal in Humanities has always been about hearing what you have to say. Let's put this to the test, shall we? Using two of the three following authors – Mill, Marx, and Wagner – write a thesis-based essay in which you compare or contrast your two authors' views on a theme of your choice.

The requirement:

A). You must develop your own topic on a specific debatable issue. Your proposed prompt must be in a written format and must be attached to your essay.

B). Your section teacher must approve your project in advance. If you do not consult with your section teacher, then you will not be allowed to write on this prompt.

Note: You must get a clearance from your section teacher as soon as possible. You certainly don't want to get vetoed close to the due date.

Length: 5-7 pages.

Due: In lecture, Tuesday 28 April. Please hand your essay to your section teacher after lecture. Late papers will be penalized by the subtraction of one third of a letter grade per day. Finally, don't forget turnitin.com!