The second 5-6-page essay is due at the beginning of lecture on Friday, February 27th. Please remember that you have to submit both a hard copy of your paper in class and also an electronic copy to turnitin.com. Three possible paper topics are posted below. Whichever you choose, be sure to have a clear thesis and produce a sustained argument based on judicious use of textual evidence.

1. In his *Discourse on Inequality* Rousseau insists that nature is good and civilization is bad, but he also concedes that the very mental capacities that enabled us to leave the state of nature have made it impossible for us to know exactly what the state of nature was like—or even if it really existed at all. Thus nature takes on something of a hypothetical status in his argument, even though he often writes as if he were describing verifiable facts. With this in mind, consider the rhetorical function of appeals to nature in two of the following three works: Rousseau’s *Discourse on Inequality*, Goethe’s *Sorrows of Young Werther*, and/or Büchner’s *Danton’s Death*. How does the author (Rousseau) or the author’s characters (Werther, Danton) use the concept of nature in his arguments against other people or points of view?

2. In the painting *The Oath of the Horatii* by Jacques-Louis David, the men take bold actions that will change history, while the women avert their eyes and weep. The visual image encapsulates the middle-class gender roles that allowed men to act in the public sphere and consigned women to passivity and domesticity. Women nevertheless play important roles in some of the literary works that we have read. Write a thesis-driven essay that compares Goethe’s Charlotte (*Young Werther*) with the women in *Danton’s Death*. To what extent do they fulfill or challenge stereotypical female roles of the period?

3. The general will is always right, as Rousseau defines it in *The Social Contract*; the problem lies in determining whether or not a given individual or society is acting in accordance with the general will. The majority can err; individuals sometimes have to be “forced to be free.”

With this ambivalence in mind, consider how Locke and Jefferson legitimate political revolution. That is, how do they try to prove that the particular revolution that they support (The Glorious Revolution for Locke, the American Revolution for Jefferson) is a legitimate expression of the general will and not the whim of a deluded individual or misguided political party?