Essay 4 – Research Paper – *Orange Is the New Black*

**Essay 4: At a Glance**

In Essay #4, we are taking a theme or topic from a book and developing that into a research-based argument paper. The essay must provide quotations from the *Orange Is the New Black* at least twice and must incorporate 5-7 secondary sources to help provide background information and factual evidence to support the essay’s main assertion.

**Main Goals for Essay 4**

- Write a thesis statement that makes a claim about an idea or theme found in *Orange Is the New Black*
- Support a thesis using textual evidence from primary and secondary sources and logical inferences about those sources
- Demonstrate improved usage of MLA citation methods

**Texts for Essay 4**

- Piper Kerman – *Orange Is the New Black*
- At least five secondary sources related to your topic. Most of these sources should come from the library databases. (No more than seven secondary sources are allowed.)

**Suggested Prompts**

The following is a list of possible topics. This list is not exhaustive. In other words, feel free to develop your own topic as long as it connects with some idea or theme found in *Orange Is the New Black*.

1. To what extent do today’s prisons help to rehabilitate criminals and prepare them for their lives beyond their incarceration?
2. What effect has mandatory minimum sentencing in drug offenses had on the prison population?
3. How has the opioid crisis in the Midwest and other parts of the country had on the prison population?
4. How can prisons become reformed to result in more positive outcomes for inmates and for society?
5. What effect does privilege (racial, socioeconomic, heteronormative) affect rates of conviction and incarceration?
6. What are some ways that prison is dehumanizing or humiliating to inmates? Is this humiliation warranted?
7. To what extent do today’s prisons help to rehabilitate criminals and prepare them for their lives beyond their incarceration?
8. Do the inmates ever create a sense of community while incarcerated? If so, how? If not, why not?
9. If none of these prompts sound interesting or engaging, please invent your own topic, but be sure to discuss it with me before you do too much research.

**A few things to remember:**

- Include at least two quotations from the book
- Quote and/or paraphrase from at least five secondary sources to develop and support your argument (remember to include a signal phrase)
- Talk about complexities of the book and avoid oversimplifying it.
- Use your critical voice to argue about a topic connected to the book.
- This assignment must be a minimum of 6 FULL pages and follow MLA formatting and guidelines for citations.

**Turn-in Procedures**

- Your final draft is due to Turnitin via Canvas on _____________________________ by ____________.
- The hard copy is due on ___________________________ at the start of class
- Essays not submitted to Turnitin will not be graded
- Attach the following documents in your assignment in this order: 1) sentence outline, 2) final draft (including a works cited page)