IN CLASS ESSAY PROMPT

Pick one prompt and write a four-to-five paragraph essay in response.

- Write on every other line in your notebook (to allow space for comments.)
- Your essay should have a clear, specific thesis (e.g., “X is true because of A, B, and C”) and have well-developed body paragraphs that stay on topic (e.g. one for A, one for B, one for C).
- Your conclusion, while brief, should do more than just restate your thesis. It should advance your argument in some way.
- DON’T STRESS: This essay is primarily for diagnostic purposes. It’s a starting point for the class.

PROMPT ONE

Each day we are presented with new ideas. Like Plato’s “Allegory of the Cave,” once we’ve been presented an idea, we can never think about things in the same way again.

Pick an idea that you’ve encountered and describe how it has changed the way you view things.

The source of this idea can be a song, a movie, a book, the news, a separate personal experience, or something else entirely. Support your claim with 2-3 examples from your own life of how this idea impacted you.

PROMPT TWO

The day you begin to suspect that all reality is an illusion, Laurence Fishburne shows up in your dorm room in his leather trench coat and offers you the same choice he offered Keanu Reeves in the movie “The Matrix.” The red pill or the blue pill?

The blue pill allows you to stay comfortably in your current illusion of reality (the world as you know it.)

The red pill awakens you to the true reality, similar to the prisoner being released from the cave in Plato’s allegory. (For the sake of this essay, you don’t yet know that the true reality is an apocalyptic world ruled by machines in which humans are enslaved. Like Keanu, all you know is that true reality is something you have be shown firsthand.)

Which pill do you take?

As evidence of your decision, recount 2-3 examples from your own life of instances where finding out a hidden truth either helped or hindered your personal development. Or, you may focus on one such incident from your life and 2-3 of its consequences.