Prompts for Paper #2 (Human Nature)

1. Choose to agree with either Locke or Hobbes’ theory about human nature. Use a portion of your introductory paragraph to briefly introduce and explain your chosen philosopher’s theory, then spend the body of your essay arguing 2-3 clear reasons why that theory is true.

2. Develop your own theory about human nature, one that is at least slightly different from Locke and Hobbes’ theories. Are humans born with a specific tendency, whether good or evil? Are humans born with any tendency at all? Briefly explain your theory in the intro, then spend the body of your essay arguing 2-3 reasons why your theory is true.

3. In the TED talk clips we watched, Ben Saunders and Roz Savage explained the hardships they faced while skiing to the North Pole (Saunders) and rowing across the Atlantic Ocean (Savage). Savage said she rowed because she felt like her life was unadventurous and boring, and that going on “adventures” would make her more proud of the way she lived. Saunders said he skied because he wanted to live “right at the limit of human capability,” to test his human potential. Develop and analyze 2-3 other reasons why humans seek to do the kinds of things Saunders and Savage have done (i.e. are there innate, universal longings or desires that drive us to go on life-threatening, non-scientific expeditions? What makes us want the adventure?)

Format requirements: 500-750 words (double-spaced, 12 point font, Times New Roman, 1-inch margins)
Tips for Paper #2:

Purpose: As we discussed in class, your purpose for many of these papers will be to persuade—to state a *debatable* opinion and argue that it’s true.

Audience: academic, the typical college instructor. This particular college instructor not only hopes that you will persuade her to agree with you, but is also looking to see that you know how to use a three-point thesis and PIE (which we will discuss on TH, Sep 12).

Presentation: you should make this decision based on who your audience is. So, since you’re writing for a college English instructor, you should use the MLA format. We’ll discuss in detail what this format looks like before the paper is due.

Evidence: this is the one area in which I am letting you “break” the typical academic essay conventions. Many (but not all) college professors prefer students not to use “I” in an academic paper. But since I don’t want you doing outside research, all of your evidence should come from your own personal experience and observations. You can use “I.” That being said, the more *logically* and carefully your evidence proves your thesis, the more an academic person would be persuaded. Prove your argument with clear, sound reasoning.

Language: for the previous paper, I told you to write as if you were writing to your peers. Therefore, the language could contain words like “you,” “dizzy,” “gonna.” But this paper is for a college instructor. The language doesn’t need to be wordy, and you don’t need to show me all the big words you know. But it does need to be more formal than the language you use with your friends. It needs to make you seem like a professional, reasonable, respectful person.

Adapted from Debra Monroe, Texas State University