

Personal & Social Responsibility (PSR) Sample Prompts

[Click here for the PSR rubric](#)

PSR Dimensions:

Intercultural reasoning and intercultural competence	Sustainability and the natural and human worlds	Ethical reasoning	Collaboration skills, teamwork and value systems	Civic discourse, civic knowledge and engagement
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General observations about PSR dimensions:

Example 1: The student artifacts for this assignment prompt were consistently rated “proficient” for both selected dimensions.

Gen Ed Area of Study	Course Name	Dimensions Selected	
Humanities	Legacy of Science and Society	Intercultural reasoning and intercultural competence	Civic discourse, civic knowledge and engagement

Assignment Description:

Synthesis paper:

The synthesis paper must combine at least three readings. Two of these must come from our class readings, and one must be from the period pre-dating the 19th century (1800s). The third can be an outside and/or modern source on the topic you’ve chosen. The synthesis paper must focus on a specific theme that comes up in each of the readings to demonstrate the legacy of that theme from the pre-modern period up to the modern period. The synthesis paper must be 1600-1800 words long, double-spaced, and must be original, well-written, and carefully proofread. The synthesis paper will be graded based on the strength and clarity of your argument, on your analysis of the chosen texts, and on proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Any quotes, facts, or opinions/ideas of other authors/scholars must be cited using MLA style. The synthesis paper must also include a bibliography/works cited page where the sources used in the paper are listed in MLA style and in alphabetical order. A list of our online readings with full bibliographic information is posted on Learn. If you have questions about MLA style, you should refer to the Purdue OWL website for MLA guidelines.

Some suggestions for legacy concepts:

- Skepticism of scientific theories or progress
- Scientific ethics over the course of time
- Science’s role in defining what it means to be human and/or part of a dominant class/species

	A (90-100 points)	B (80-89 points)	C (70-79 points)	D (60-69 points)	F (0-59 points)
Paper meets all basic assignment requirements (1600-1800 words long; uses a minimum of three sources, two from class, and one of which must pre-date the 19th century). 10%	√	√	Paper meets most basic requirements	Paper does not meet basic requirements	Paper does not meet basic requirements
Paper takes an analytical approach (as opposed to simply summarizing sources) to a specific theme in the readings from the pre-modern era (before the 19 th century) through the modern era. 20%	√	√	Paper shows evidence of an analytical approach, but is not consistently analytical throughout	Paper presents a summary of the sources without any analysis or evidence of critical thinking	Paper lacks any evidence of required source material and summarizes the topic without any analysis or critical thinking
Paper is well-organized (has a clear introduction and thesis, body paragraphs are at least 3 sentences long, has a separate conclusion that summarizes the author's argument/evidence). 20%	√	Paper has some organizational issues	Paper has some organizational issues	Paper lacks a thesis and has other organizational issues	Paper lacks a thesis and has many organizational issues
Paper is well-written (few or no grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors). 20%	√	Paper has some grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors	Paper has many grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors	Paper has many grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors	Paper has many grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors
All quotations, facts, and opinions of other scholars/authors are cited using appropriate MLA guidelines. 20%	√	Citations are not consistently cited or are not in MLA style	Citations are not in MLA style or are missing	Citations are absent	Quotations, facts, etc. are completely lacking and citations are absent
Bibliography/works cited page is included and lists sources alphabetically using appropriate MLA guidelines. 10%	√	Bibliography is missing sources, is not in alphabetical order, does not use MLA style	Bibliography is missing sources, is not in alphabetical order, does not use MLA style	Bibliography is not included, is missing sources, does not use MLA style	Bibliography is not included, is missing sources, does not use MLA style

Example 2: The student artifacts for this assignment prompt were excellent examples of both selected dimensions but especially intercultural reasoning and intercultural competence.

Gen Ed Area of Study	Course Name	Dimensions Selected	
Humanities	Legacy of Success	Intercultural reasoning and intercultural competence	Civic discourse, civic knowledge, and engagement

Assignment Description:

Length: No less than 8-12 full pages of well-polished text, double spaced, plus an accurate Works Cited page, all following MLA format precisely. I will not grade any project that fails to meet these basic expectations, nor will you be permitted to rewrite or resubmit your essay. See the syllabus, my Guide to Writing, and the Revision Triage Checklist for help meeting these basic expectations without which your paper cannot be taken seriously.

Due: Monday, December 6, 2021, in hard copy at the start of class AND by email as a MS-Word document (.doc. or .docx) unless we have agreed on another format.

Notes: As always, you must cite textual evidence for every assertion you make, and you must explain the relevance of each quotation to your thesis. (For creative projects, you should hold off on the textual evidence and parenthetical citations until your analytical section.)

Do not repeat major portions of earlier essays, merely summarize texts (beyond the appropriate places where context is necessary), project outside knowledge onto your interpretations, or regurgitate class discussion.

Even though these projects are much more creative than the earlier analytical papers you have written in this course, they must still be very rigorous. I once again urge you to consult your MLA Handbook, my template, my Guide to Writing, and my Revision Triage Checklist for help meeting these basic expectations.

I also expect you to review my typed comments and handwritten notes on all of your earlier papers. Failure to improve your writing and argumentation will seriously impact your grade on this paper.

Instructions: Please write on ONE of the following topics:

1. This first prompt, like a reaction paper on steroids, invites you to use your personal reflections as a frame for a rigorous analysis of how at least three of our texts deal with the same issues. You should begin by reviewing your reading journal from this semester and identify one or two related major themes that have most resonated with you in your responses to the reflection questions, then choose three to five relevant texts from our syllabus that respond to the themes that have been on your mind, even if those authors respond differently.

At least two-thirds of your essay should consist of rigorous literary criticism of how several of the texts we have read this semester approach these issues; the other one-third (or so) of your paper is your space to give a personal frame to your analysis, including liberal quotations from your reading journal. As with the short reflection papers, an anecdote would be a strong way to open your essay; I urge you to draw connections between your own experience and our readings throughout your essay and not just in the opening and closing. For example, you could examine your own ideas about the subject of change and growth and then see how change and personal growth are portrayed in such works as Horace's Satires, Benjamin Franklin's Autobiography, and Frederick Douglass's Narrative of the Life, mentioning a couple of other texts in passing. What lessons have you learned from them?

A good outline for your paper would look something like this. Your introduction to this longer paper could be one very beefy paragraph or it might span two paragraphs. You should open with a relevant personal anecdote drawn from your own experience, then either in the same paragraph or in a second, provide your reader with key context about the paper that follows, ending your introduction with a **thesis statement** about what you

found in the other works and what they suggest about the societies for which they were written.

The body of your paper should offer substantial analysis of the literature and the society for which each text was written, but this is still a personal essay and so you will need to artfully interject yourself as the author to form transition paragraphs to take your reader from section to section. I recommend quoting from your reflection journal to show your progression of thought over the semester as you read and reacted to each text. How did you change as a result of a reading? Did each author handle the topic in the assigned text in the same way that you did in your journal?

For your conclusion, you will need to wrap up not only the analytical discussion but also your personal frame. Your last paragraph should tie up all the loose threads, ideally by resolving issues you have raised in your personal narrative beginning with the opening anecdote. The paper should come full circle.

In this way, you have will an opportunity not only to explore philosophical concepts as they develop in literature over time, but also to trace your own understanding of these ideas as they have affected you personally, and, perhaps, as your perspective on them has changed over time.

Thus through this paper you will explain how different people in different times have dealt with similar philosophical problems facing you. Although I invite relevant anecdotes and candid personal reflections on the subject, as usual I will not tolerate speculation, broad generalization, or any unsubstantiated claims. While your paper does not have to be primarily about success, you will need to draw some connections to the idea of success in your understanding of the philosophical problem you are investigating. As with all your writing, you must present your thesis statement at the end of your introduction (which may be more than one paragraph long), and you must cite evidence for every assertion you make, whether it is a personal anecdote, a quote from your reading journal, or meticulously-cited evidence from the assigned reading. Above all, your final paper should be intellectually honest, academically rigorous, and gracefully constructed.

2. This second prompt allows you to showcase your commitment to intellectual rigor through a creative story and an analytical narrative. **For this creative option, you will create a fictional character from a time and place of your choosing, but related to the legacy of success as our course has understood it.** (You may NOT create a character who would be living today—it must be someone from the past, living in an era and place we've studied.) You may approach the creative portion of this project however you wish, so long as it is appropriate to the era. A time-tested approach is to write a series of journal entries (which could be from a span of many years), but you may pursue any approach you can pull off with rigor and grace.

You must include, but are not limited to, the following characteristics: your character's name, age, gender, race, principle residence, marital status, profession, interests, family

life, family history, religion, friends, and so forth—all with an eye to how these elements help determine whether your person was a success in his or her society. You must include at least one major test of success for your character—even if he or she does not succeed.

You must use all relevant assigned texts for inspiration (e.g., you cannot write about the Roaring Twenties without citing both Gentlemen Prefer Blondes and The Great Gatsby). You will need to include a Works Cited page of the class readings plus at least five other sources that informed your project (and which you will quote in the second part of your paper). Thus in addition to information you gather from our readings this semester, you should use the library and reputable scholarly internet resources to paint an accurate portrait of your time period; commercial websites, Wikipedia, Shmoop, Khan Academy, YouTube videos, etc. are not generally acceptable sources in an Honors term paper.

This creative component of your paper will probably fill 6-7 pages, but you could write more.

You will then need to write a 4-6-page (minimum) narrative explaining how you made every decision about your character and his or her story and test of success. You must have a thesis at the end of the introduction to this analytical portion of your project describing success and failure in the era in which your story takes place. This analytical section must include rigorous documentation of every source that inspired any aspect of your story, quoting from the texts to explain not only how they led you to make certain decisions but also what those decisions suggest about success and failure at the time. In this section you may wish to discuss what worked well, and what didn't seem to work well, and why. What did you learn about success in your period from this project?

You must demonstrate a scale of success and failure in your creative section, which you must then explain in your analytical section. So although this is a creative project, it should be every bit as rigorous as any other paper you have written this semester. The historical fiction you produce should be plausible (and not mere costume drama). Do not take liberties of artistic license: you must adjust your character's traits and the events so that they accurately reflect success and failure in the era you are examining through your project.

Example 3: The student artifacts for this assignment prompt were excellent examples of both selected dimensions but especially civic discourse, civic knowledge, and engagement.

Gen Ed Area of Study	Course Name	Dimensions Selected	
Arts and Design	Introduction to Film Studies	Intercultural reasoning and intercultural competence	Civic discourse, civic knowledge, and engagement

Assignment Description: Students first watch the film *Favela Rising* in class. They then wrote a response to the film based on class discussions using the following guidelines.

Reflect on the film *Favela Rising* in 2 -3 thorough paragraphs using terms and concepts. Answer each of the following within your reflection:

- Address how elements of editing helped tell the story - the types of edits, the use of continuity editing, the connections between shots and so on.
- Discuss sound. Specifically, how did the combination of non-diegetic and diegetic sound function? What did it make you feel? How did it help tell the story, or focus our attention? What was your overarching sensation while watching and how did the music contribute to that? Did the sound become a motif? Etc. Be sure to use terminology from the readings.
- Does it seem that real revolution - in the good sense, in the sense of positive change - can only come from within communities (i.e. it takes an insider in a community to make lasting change)?

Example 4: The student artifacts for this assignment prompt were highly rated for both selected dimensions but especially for sustainability and the natural and human worlds.

Gen Ed Area of Study	Course Name	Dimensions Selected	
Humanities	Legacy of Humans and their Environment	Intercultural reasoning and intercultural competence	Sustainability and the natural and human worlds

Assignment Description:

Synthesis paper:

The synthesis paper must combine at least three readings. Two of these must come from our class readings, and one must be from the period pre-dating the 19th century (1800s). The third can be an outside and/or modern source on the topic you've chosen. The synthesis paper must focus on a specific theme that comes up in each of the readings to demonstrate the legacy of that theme from the pre-modern period up to the modern period. The synthesis paper must be 1600-1800 words long, double-spaced, and must be original, well-written, and carefully proofread. The synthesis paper will be graded based on the strength and clarity of your argument, on your analysis of the chosen texts, and on proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Any quotes, facts, or opinions/ideas of other authors/scholars must be cited using MLA style. The synthesis paper must also include a bibliography/works cited page where the sources used in the paper are listed in MLA style and in alphabetical order. A list of our online readings with full bibliographic information is posted on Learn. If you have questions about MLA style, you should refer to the Purdue OWL website for MLA guidelines.

Some suggestions for legacy concepts:

- Myths regarding the environment
- Use or management of natural resources
- Political attitudes toward the environment as a whole, or toward specific aspects of the environment such as natural resources

	A (90-100 points)	B (80-89 points)	C (70-79 points)	D (60-69 points)	F (0-59 points)
Paper meets all basic assignment requirements (1600-1800 words long; uses a minimum of three sources, two from class, and one of which must pre-date the 19th century). 10%	✓	✓	Paper meets most basic requirements	Paper does not meet basic requirements	Paper does not meet basic requirements
Paper takes an analytical approach (as opposed to simply summarizing sources) to a specific theme in the readings from the pre-modern era (before the 19 th century) through the modern era. 20%	✓	✓	Paper shows evidence of an analytical approach, but is not consistently analytical throughout	Paper presents a summary of the sources without any analysis or evidence of critical thinking	Paper lacks any evidence of required source material and summarizes the topic without any analysis or critical thinking
Paper is well-organized (has a clear introduction and thesis, body paragraphs are at least 3 sentences long, has a separate conclusion that summarizes the author's argument/evidence). 20%	✓	Paper has some organizational issues	Paper has some organizational issues	Paper lacks a thesis and has other organizational issues	Paper lacks a thesis and has many organizational issues
Paper is well-written (few or no grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors). 20%	✓	Paper has some grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors	Paper has many grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors	Paper has many grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors	Paper has many grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors
All quotations, facts, and opinions of other scholars/authors are cited using appropriate MLA guidelines. 20%	✓	Citations are not consistently cited or are not in MLA style	Citations are not in MLA style or are missing	Citations are absent	Quotations, facts, etc. are completely lacking and citations are absent
Bibliography/works cited page is included and lists sources alphabetically using appropriate MLA guidelines. 10%	✓	Bibliography is missing sources, is not in alphabetical order, does not use MLA style	Bibliography is missing sources, is not in alphabetical order, does not use MLA style	Bibliography is not included, is missing sources, does not use MLA style	Bibliography is not included, is missing sources, does not use MLA style

Example 5: The student artifacts for this assignment prompt were highly rated for both selected dimensions but especially for ethical reasoning.

Gen Ed Area of Study	Course Name	Dimensions Selected	
Humanities	Greek Mythology	Intercultural reasoning and intercultural competence	Ethical reasoning

Assignment Description:

How to write the paper! Fall 2021 Edition

THE DRAFT OF THIS PAPER IS DUE by 11/21 and is worth

THE FINAL PAPER IS DUE Dec. 12, 2021 No late papers will be accepted!

Using **ONLY the Homeric Hymns (#1, 7, 24, 26, and 29 are relevant), and the two assigned plays-- Euripedes' *Bacchae* and Aeschylus' *The Frogs***--and the videos I have included in this area of the Learn site (i.e., NO OUTSIDE SOURCES!) you will be doing an analysis of the god, Dionysus. Answer the following questions in a 5-7 page paper. Your paper *must* be **typed, 12 point font, double spaced, with regular margins. You MUST use Chicago style footnotes for your citations, and you must have at least 1 direct citation in each of your body paragraphs!!! (JUST TRY!)**

1. What do you think is most important about the two vastly different portrayals of the god? How do you think Greek folk felt about the god Dionysus?
2. What roles do sexuality, gender norms, and gender performance play in both portrayals of the god, and also portrayals of the humans?
3. What difference did it make to read the plays vs. seeing them? What difference does live performance make? What do you think it means about Greek belief that BOTH of these plays were performed at religious festivals?

How to make footnote citations:

In Word, simply look under "references" for "add footnote"

First citation will be full, and other citations of the same work will have a shortened version.

So the first time you cite *Bacchae* will look like this: For example, in *Bacchae* the main character does xyz.¹

The second, and all other following, citation of *Bacchae* will look like this: we also see this later in *Bacchae* when the woman says²

The first citation of *Secret History* like this: Julian is not as cool as Peninah, but he seems like a great professor when he does XYZ in *Secret History*.³

And the second citation, and all others following, of *Secret History* like this: Bunny comes off like a toxic-jock-type cliché from the 90's, especially in the dinner scene of *Secret History*.⁴

¹Euripedes, *Bacchae*, trans. Robin Robertson (Harper Collins, 2014), lines 100-123.

²Euripedes, *Bacchae*, lines 420-433.

³Donna Tartt, *Secret History* (Vintage Books, 1992), 200.

⁴Tartt, *Secret History*, 340.

You will be graded on whether or not you followed directions, if your paper was organized and used direct evidence, and if you answered all the questions. Though you must use footnotes, I want you to get practice at this! I will not grade you on how good your footnotes are, I will merely correct them so you can get the hang of how to do them correctly! USE THIS AS A GREAT TIME TO LEARN TO FOOTNOTE! This is a great skill to have, and will serve you well in later writing!

Things to keep in mind:

The BEST way to proofread something is to read it out loud, with a pen or pencil in your hand to make corrections!!

The BEST way to organize a paper is to follow 5 paragraph essay format, even if you have more than three points/body paragraphs to make! So:

Intro: Say what you are going to say, and include a thesis statement Body paragraphs: Say it, touching on all the major points of your thesis.

Conclusion: Say what you said: conclude each paragraph in one representative sentence here and then tie it all together by basically saying “see, I was right, RESTATE THESIS”

WRITE LIKE YOU TALK!!! DON'T TRY TO “SOUND GOOD”!! Seriously, if you sound like someone wearing a powdered wig, or a movie preview voiceover, you are doing it wrong! The best way to sound smart is to be clear, and direct!

Paragraph .	No (did not follow directions or format, and made many mistakes in writing) (5 points)	Partially (tried, but made a big mistake in following format/directions) (7.5 points)	Yes (followed format well, and no huge errors in grammar, etc.) (9 points)	Perfectly! (with no errors of any kind!) (10 points)
Introduction: did it introduce the material?				
Introduction: did it have a thesis statement?				
Body 1: did it focus on one idea/have good organization?				
Body 1: did it cite the text to support the claim being made?				
Body 2: did it focus on one idea/have good organization?				
Body 2: did it cite the text to support the claim being made?				
Body 3: did it focus on one idea/have good organization?				
Body 2: did it cite the text to support the claim being made?				
Conclusion: did it conclude each paragraph, and then the paper overall?				
OVERALL: did the author follow directions?				
OVERALL: did the author answer the questions asked?				
Total				

Grade: