

English 102
Fall 2016
Grayson

In-class writing assignment due at the end of class today.

Hermann Hesse said, “Without words, without writing and without books there would be no history, there would be no concept of humanity.” This course is based on a sequence of related assignments that invites you to explore our unfolding concept of humanity from multiple perspectives.

Today please check in with your notions about humanity and in a written response, please address the following prompt:

What does it mean to be human? How do we know? Please **identify & name** two very specific qualities, features, or tendencies that you most associate with humanity. Please avoid the most obvious choices, like metacognition and opposable thumbs. Use your observations and experience as a guide and be specific as you **define and describe** humanity in your own words, from your own perspective.

Next, please unpack and **discuss how & why** your two selected qualities/features/tendencies represent your idea of humanity. Present and discuss a specific example. Explain the relationship between the qualities and your notion of humanity.

Write your response on a separate sheet of paper, and be sure to hand it in at the end of class today. I am looking forward to reading your responses.

Questions that may encourage pre-draft free writing:

What comes to mind when you think of humanity?

How would you define humanity? Why?

When and how do you recognize humanity? or a lack of humanity?

What other words and ideas are closely related to humanity? How and why?

Does anything fall outside of our “humanity?” If yes, how so? Why? If no, why not?

We inhabit the world with many other nonhuman species (humanity in context). How does this affect our understanding of or our definition of humanity?

Reminder: Please check your UMB email for an invite to our wiki. Follow the link to become a member of our wiki today. I will be notified as soon as you gain access.