

Crown CORE 2009 Summer Reading/Essay Assignment

The Book

Please get a copy of *Anne Frank Remembered* by Miep Gies and Alison Leslie Gold, published by Simon and Schuster. You can order it from a bookstore, or on-line for approximately \$15. New, Used copies are available on-line.

The Assignment

What?! Why am I reading a book about a woman who tried to save some people during WWII for my Crown CORE course? I thought Crown CORE was called Ethics in Emerging Technologies? The Genetic Revolution: Science and Technology? What the heck, why are we reading this?

Background

In the most simple terms, ethics is the branch of philosophy that addresses the question, what should I do? In your CORE class you will learn about some powerful new technologies. These technologies are already in use, and will continue to develop in your lifetime. You will be called upon to help guide decisions about how these technologies should be researched and used. Some of you may choose professions in which you will regulate, develop and/or apply these technologies yourself.

So how will you decide what to do? As you engage in important questions of the world community, how will you make decisions? That is the fundamental point from which we will begin discussions in your CORE class in the Fall. The first step in answering that question is recognizing the many things that shape how each individual makes decisions. In the case of Miep Gies, her decisions became world-renowned.

Miep Gies is well known for her role in hiding Anne Frank and her family in Amsterdam during Nazi occupation in WWII. In her memoir, *Anne Frank Remembered*, Gies describes her life before, during and after 1942-1944, the years during which she and several other people hid Anne Frank and several others in an attempt to save them from Nazi capture, and almost certain death.

Read the book and think about what types of experiences, values, or beliefs might have influenced Gies's decision to participate in hiding Anne Frank and her family and friends. Consider what values Gies learned from her friends and family, from the community in which she lived, and from the political climate of her time. Look for experiences that she describes that may have left a lasting impression upon her, and helped shape her decisions.

Essay Prompt

Remember that ethics addresses the question, "what should I do?" Try to empathize with Gies. Identify experiences, beliefs, and values that you think may have influenced Gies as she decided to risk her own life to hide Anne Frank and the others. Write an essay (3-4 pages typed, double spaced) that discusses how each influence that you've identified helped guide Gies's ethical decision to shelter the Franks. In other words, how does she arrive at the answer to the question, "What should I do?"