

Dear Student,

We look forward to your arrival at Crown College in the Fall of 2016. As you know, in Winter quarter, you will take Crown's Core Course—Social and Ethical Implications of Emerging Technologies. The course begins with a Summer Assignment (SA) that introduces some Core issues. We write to you today to make sure that you get a jump-start on the Summer Assignment.

Your SA has two parts. The first part asks you to develop an *analytical essay* of three-four pages about Dave Egger's *The Circle*, and the second part asks you to write a one-two-page *narrative log* that details the twenty-four-hour eFast you will undertake.

The details of each are given below. You will discuss the novel and your eFast in class on the first day in September. Please bring both parts of the Assignment with you, and turn them in to your Instructor—regardless of whether you have placed into Crown 79, Writing 20, or Honors.

Please start both Part 1 and Part 2 on a separate page (so they can be reviewed separately), and be sure to type your name on each, in the upper, right-hand corner. Attach them to each other with a clip.

Part 1: The Circle Essay

The Circle portrays many issues resulting from the characters' increasing use of social media. Your task is to analyze *at least one* ethical, social, or political issue presented in the novel and to explain why this issue is important for twenty-first-century readers.

As you develop this essay, you have many options for which issue/s to discuss. Possible examples (but there are many more) include: privacy, surveillance, the authenticity of online "friendships," dependence on online recognition, a practice or institution that social media leave in place or contest, etc. Please keep in mind your goal as you select your issue/s. You are *not* writing a plot summary of the novel. Instead, you are analyzing the ideas the novel presents—and why you think they are important.

As you craft your analysis, please create an *analytical thesis statement* that explains the issue you explore and tell why it's important. This thesis will help your readers understand the focus of your essay.

In your supporting paragraphs, please explain how the issue/s you identify in the text connect with the larger social, political, or historical context. Be sure to give concrete examples and evidence from the text, your life, *and* your observations and experience of current culture and society that support your insights about your chosen issue/s.

Try to achieve a balance of textual summary and quotation. Then, follow up with an analysis of the significance of specific textual examples and how they support your analysis. Remember, you are being asked to think deeply about important issues, not to

take a binary pro or con position. Also, please be specific. We are asking you to critically engage with the text and to *think* about it, showing how its themes matter in the larger social, political, or historical context. (A second reading of the novel will aid you in this process immeasurably.)

Please feel free to integrate the experience of your eFast in your analysis of *The Circle*, noting changes in your attention—to people, animals, relationships, things, the outside world, the natural environment, etc.—and whether they were attenuated, enlarged, or remained the same. Feel free to mention how you think an eFast would affect Mae (the main character in) *The Circle*.

Finally, students are expected to use clear and succinct language that demonstrates thoughtful analysis. Be sure to edit your essay for good word choice, and proof your essay for errors in spelling, punctuation, completeness, and syntax.

Questions to Get You Started:

- Are we approaching a situation depicted in the novel—or even aspects of it (a surveillance society, voluntary transparency in social media, emotional dependence and validation of personal worth through virtuality)?
- Or is there evidence that we are *not* on a path to a totalizing society like that depicted in *The Circle*? That we won't get there?
- Think about—and use— your observations and knowledge of social media use and your assessment of the importance of the Internet and digital media in your analysis.

Hint:

- Take notes as you read *The Circle*, and refer to them when you begin to outline and write your essay. When you use quotes from the text to support your assertions, be sure to put page numbers in parenthesis.
- Give your essay a compelling title (centered, using initial caps [except for prepositions and articles]).
- Book titles are always in italics.

Part 2: eFast Narrative Log

Choose a 24-period (It may be longer, but it must be at least 24-hours in duration.). Note the time and date in your (handwritten, non-digital) log. You may choose the date, but you must do the eFast—and write a log detailing it—*before* you arrive at Crown this Fall.

At the start of your eFast, turn off *all* digital communications and social media and refrain from any access to them for at least 24 hours. During your eFast, you will not text, email, or access the Internet in any way, including *any* social media, gaming sites, etc. Likewise, you will not use cell phones, computers, pads, tablets, *or any other Internet-connected device* (FitBits, etc.), which means *no content streaming* (NetFlix, etc.) of any kind. Please

keep in mind that you may read non-electronic, print-media books, articles, newspapers, magazines, etc.

As your day evolves (or devolves), please write down the changes and challenges (or opportunities) you experience (in your routine, your expectations, your mindset). Note the ways that your life—and the lives of your friends, family, and others around you—is altered. Throughout your eFast, use pen/pencil and paper to record your experiences briefly in your Log. Include any consequences of *not* using digital media—both positive and negative.

Hint: In keeping the detailed log of your experiences, note the differences (if any) you find in writing with pen/pencil and paper rather than typing on a keyboard or keypad that is mirrored on a screen.

Enjoy the reading, the adventure, and the exploring, and just do the best you can!
Welcome to college, and happy Summer Assignment!

Best Wishes,

Manel Camps
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University of California, Santa Cruz