

CITIZENS AND STRANGERS

GATEWAY FALL 2013

ESSAY #3

Write a 5-7 page essay on ONE of the following topics. Your essay is due in class on TUESDAY October 8. Be sure to include page numbers and a title that conveys your thesis. Bring a paper copy of your paper to class. We will then review your draft and revised thesis at our FRIDAY October 11 conference. The revised version of your paper is due in the box outside CLA 251 by 4 PM on MONDAY October 14.

This time your audience is not a class member, but an average American citizen. Imagine that your essay will appear in the book review section of the Sunday newspaper. Your audience has not read the book. Let us imagine that they will want to read it after reading your essay.

I will be focusing my assessment of these papers on three key aspects of any interpretive essay (1) the hook: be sure to hook the reader in the first few sentences; (2) the developed thesis: be sure to develop the implications of your thesis; and (3) the “so what?” question: be sure to explain to the reader why they should care about what you have uncovered in the text.

Your essay should take as a starting point one of the following two key interpretive themes.

1. *The Ox-Bow Incident* is a book about how members use and abuse their privileges. The book tells the story of a lynch mob. Clark uses the various motivations of the mob’s members to explore the causes of the abuse of power.

Write an essay analyzing the motives and causes driving the *Ox-bow* mob. Be sure to answer the question: what does this book say about the nature of group membership?

2. *The Ox-Bow Incident* was written in 1940, in the darkest days before World War II. Fascism was at its height, and Walter Van Tilburg Clark wrote the book to promote a cosmopolitan point of view.

Write an essay analyzing the Davies’ view of the law and his anguish over his decision not to shoot Tetley before the lynching.