

Responding to the Reading: Science, Society & the Human Person

ENG 103
Dr. Alison Witte

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF SCIENCE IN SOCIETY?

One of the major ideas that we've looked at in our reading of *Hidden Figures* is the roles of science and technology in how society functions, the roles people have in society, and how cultures change and develop. The book raises questions about how the general public sees or conceives of scientists, about the role of science in cultural change, and about how world events affect the directions that scientific research takes.

Many of you are considering careers in fields that directly or indirectly will engage with similar questions. Some of you may have already dealt with some of these questions as you've been surprised by the reactions people have had when you decided to pursue a particular career or by how a particular innovation changes how people interact with each other and the world around them. As you move toward becoming researchers, inventors, and innovators, you will have to personally respond to some of the issues this book addresses.

ASSIGNMENT & FORMAT

In this assignment, you will need to write a thesis-driven response, based on one of the prompts below, in which you make a claim and support that claim with examples from *Hidden Figures*, examples from your own experience and from research you do on your own.

Prompt #1— Scientists and Identity

Think about the depictions of scientists you see in movies and on television. Most of the time, they fall into one of three categories: (1) evil villains; (2) wacky with big hair, or (3) nerdy and socially-inept. These depictions, while serving a purpose to create humor or provide a villain character, do not represent the majority of scientists. *Hidden Figures* points out that people assumed that all scientific work was being done by white men, while in reality women and people of different ethnic and racial backgrounds were also contributing to scientific development.

What characteristics make someone a scientist, researcher, and innovator?

Prompt #2—Science and World Events

Throughout *Hidden Figures*, world events like WWI, WWII and the launch of Sputnik, drive the types of research that is conducted and the types of research that are no longer necessary. The book shows the ways these types of events not only dictated what kinds of projects were necessary for success in war or increased safety of the general public, but also where resources like people and money were allocated. Scientists often had to make choices about what to pursue so that they could keep working and stay relevant. **Should scientists choose projects that respond to major events and are more likely to receive funding and bring them esteem or projects they find interesting and important regardless of the potential for funding or esteem?**

Prompt #3—Science & Cultural Change

One of the prevalent themes in *Hidden Figures* is that both the innovations of the scientific community and the ways in which the scientific community works together can create change in society and culture. Most obviously,

the inclusion of women in the workforce during the world wars caused a general shift in how families functioned economically and socially. We also see throughout the book how as technologies change and advance, the ways people work, receive information, and interact with one another changes. **In general, are there more benefits or drawbacks to the social and cultural changes brought about by scientific innovations? Consider one or two specific innovations to support your answer.**

Papers should be 2-3 double spaced pages. They must contain at least 1 example/quote from *Hidden Figures* and 2 sources you find on your own. Remember that the most reliable sources include books, reference works, and academic journals. You can use other sources, but be sure that you are aware of any bias in the sources and that you have enough detail or information from the source for others to find it believable and reliable.

Your project should follow standard writing conventions and the following format:

- You will need to give your project an interesting and relevant title (Not Science, Society & the Human Person).
- Your paper needs to have a heading in MLA style
- Your paper needs to have a header in MLA style
- Your paper should be double-spaced, with 1 inch margins, and 11 or 12 point font. Please use standard fonts such as Calibri or Times New Roman.
- You need to cite your sources in MLA style and include an MLA style Works Cited page.
 - THE WORKS CITED PAGE DOES NOT COUNT IN THE PAGE REQUIREMENT.

IMPORTANT DATES

Friday 9/14 Final Version Due for Grading (Moodle)

Assessment

This project is worth 100 points (10% of your final grade). It will be assessed by the following rubric.

| | Content | Organization & Purpose | Presentation | Requirements |
|------------------------------|--|---|---|---|
| An A Project (90-100 points) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes a clear argument/claim in response to one of the prompts above Clearly connects your claims to the sources you use and provides supporting information from those sources Is interesting and engaging to read. It makes the reader want to read more | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has a clear thesis statement that makes an argument/presents an opinion Uses signal phrases to smoothly incorporate cited material into your writing Uses transitions or directions for the reader that are clear and easy to follow | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Correctly cites sources in MLA Includes a correctly formatted MLA Works Cited Page Is relatively free of minor grammar and spelling errors and contains no major errors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meets the length requirement Includes at least 2 sources Includes at least 1 example from <i>Hidden Figures</i> |
| A B Project (80-89 points) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes a mostly clear argument/claim in response to one of the prompts above, but needs more explanation or support in a few spots Mostly clearly connects your claims to the sources you use and provides supporting information from those sources but needs additional explanation or direction in a few spots Is interesting and engaging to read. It makes the reader want to read more | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has a mostly clear thesis statement that makes that makes an argument/presents an opinion, but the thesis could be clearer in a few spots Usually uses signal phrases to smoothly incorporate cited material into your writing, but has a few spots where the integration is awkward Usually uses transitions or directions for the reader that are clear and easy to follow, but has a few spots where more direction is needed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Correctly cites sources in MLA with only a few minor errors Includes a correctly formatted MLA Works Cited Page with only a few minor errors Is generally free of minor grammar and spelling errors and contains no major errors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meets the length requirement Includes at least 2 sources Includes at least 1 example from <i>Hidden Figures</i> |
| A C Project (70-79 points) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes a generally clear argument/claim in response to one of the prompts above, but needs more explanation or support in a some spots Generally connects your claims to the sources you use and provides supporting information from those sources but needs additional explanation or direction in some spots Is generally interesting and engaging to read. It makes the reader want to read more. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has a thesis statement that makes an argument/presents an opinion, but doesn't make a clear claim or the rest of the paper does not always support that claim Generally uses signal phrases to smoothly incorporate cited material into your writing, but needs to use them throughout Is somewhat easy to follow, but has many spots where transitions or directions to the reader could be more direct, or spots where the purpose of a paragraph or section are unclear as a part of the whole project | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Correctly cites sources in MLA with a some minor and a few major errors Includes a mostly correctly formatted MLA Works Cited Page with some minor errors and no more than 1 major errors Has some minor grammar and spelling errors and a few major errors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meets the length requirement Includes at least 2 sources Includes at least 1 example from <i>Hidden Figures</i> |

| | Content | Organization & Purpose | Presentation | Requirements |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| A D Project (60-69 points) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes an argument/claim in response to one of the prompts above, but needs more explanation or support in several spots OR has a topic but doesn't make a claim Somewhat connects your claims to the sources you use and provides supporting information from those sources but needs additional explanation or direction in several spots Is not generally interesting and engaging to read. It does not make the reader want to read more. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has a thesis statement but doesn't make an argument/present an opinion OR makes a weak argument but the rest of the paper does not always support that claim Minimally uses signal phrases to smoothly incorporate cited material into your writing, but needs to use them throughout Is not easy to follow, and has several spots where transitions or directions to the reader are needed, and/or some spots where the purpose of a paragraph or section are unclear as a part of the whole project | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cites sources in MLA with many minor and a few major errors Includes an incorrectly formatted MLA Works Cited Page with many minor and some major omissions or errors Has several minor and some major grammar and spelling errors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not meet the length requirement Does not include at least 2 sources Does not include 1 example from <i>Hidden Figures</i> |
| An F Project (Less than 60 points) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes a minimal argument/claim in response to one of the prompts above, but needs more explanation or support in most spots OR has a topic but doesn't make a claim Fails to present a counter-argument Rarely connects your claims to the sources you use and provides supporting information from those sources but needs additional explanation or direction in several spots Is not interesting and engaging to read. It does not make the reader want to read more. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has no clear thesis statement about the connection between art and culture, OR does not clearly support the thesis statement in the paper Rarely or never uses signal phrases to incorporate cited material Is not easy to follow because it is missing transitions or directions to the reader OR Is not easy to follow because it has too many spots where the purpose of a paragraph or section is unclear as a part of the whole project | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cites sources in MLA with many major errors OR does not cite sources Includes an incorrectly formatted MLA Works Cited Page with major omissions or errors OR includes no Works Cited page Has many minor and several major grammar and spelling errors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not meet the length requirement Does not include at least 2 sources Does not include 1 example from <i>Hidden Figures</i> |