ANALYTIC ESSAY 1

DUE ROUGH DRAFT (4 full pages) Saturday, September 19th, 11:59 PM. (via Canvas)
FINAL DRAFT (5 full pages) Saturday, September 26th, 11:59 PM (via Canvas)

TEXTS

Your essay must cite and analyze passages from the following readings:

Tolentino, Jia. "Always be optimizing." *Trick mirror: Reflections on self-delusion*. Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2020.
Ho, Karen. "Biographies of Hegemony." *Liquidated: an ethnography of Wall Street*. Duke University Press, 2009.

PROMPT

Both Ho and Tolentino criticize the process by which some groups (college students in the case of Ho, most women in the case of Tolentino) strive for an ideal that's as indefinite as empty of real content. Ho describes how students are selected into Wall Street's entry ranks through a "credentialing process" that is critically bolstered by "image and performance". Students are lured into this process by the promise of a "privileged space" that they can continue to inhabit after graduation. This space, in turn, is defined through a branding process that frames what constitutes a successful career, or even, in most general terms, a "perfect life". Tolentino instead describes how an "ordinary woman" spends all her energies moving toward "the idealized image of her own self-image".

How can an emphasis on 'excellence' create cultures of hype and uniformity that smother individuality?

THOUGHT-PROVOKERS

Below are some further questions that may be useful to consider in generating your argument. *Remember that you only need to address the above prompt in bold:*

- ➢ Consider the word "ideal" as both a noun and adjective. How is it defined, and how is it used by the authors? Does an ideal allow for a plurality of experiences or point of views?
- ➢ How would you define the "privileged space" touted by Wall Street bankers? Is it real, or is it a cultural representation? How is this cultural representation constructed?
- ➢ How could a place of learning, as Princeton or Harvard University, that should foster critical thinking, leave students susceptible to the manipulations enacted by the "cultural representation" of the "privileged space"?
- ➢ What are the hints that such space is really more akin "Darwinian fete"?
- ➢ Is optimizing our own life, as described by Tolentino, a way of creating a <u>privileged, elite space within our private life?</u>

FORMAT

You must proofread carefully.

Quotations should be carefully transcribed, punctuated, and attributed. For bibliographic conventions, you may use MLA (preferred), APA, or Chicago style. Please follow the conventions of standard edited American English. **Use 1.0-inch margins on all sides, double-spacing, and twelve-point serif font (e.g. Times New Roman, Garamond, Palatino, or Baskerville)**. Number all pages. The paper should have your name, the date, and course information on the first page Title your paper. Submit your paper electronically via Canvas. Email submissions are not acceptable.