ANALYTIC ESSAY 2

DUE	ROUGH DRAFT 1300 words	Wednesday, October 7th, 11:59 PM (via Canvas)
	FINAL DRAFT 1700 words	Wednesday, October 14th, 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.
Foer, Franklin. "Mark Zuckerberg's war on free will." *World without mind*. Random House, 2017.

PROMPT

Tolentino and Ho talk about how modernity is changing our lives, in the pursuit of either a perfect lifestyle or a perfect career. But what are the tools of this transformation?

Foer shows how the "automation of reason" brought on by increasingly sophisticated algorithms (originally a characteristic of machines) is affecting our lives more and more as algorithms increasingly define the boundaries in which our free will operates. As we let machines regulate our lives, we may be tempted to adopt a similar mindset. At the same time, an even more sinister suspicion may take hold: that the algorithmic automation has been already pre-programmed and that we may be nothing more than the data points fed into it.

How does this new wave of "automation" in general and "automation of reason" in particular enable us on the one hand to optimize our lives and careers (as described by Tolentino and Ho), and how does it, on the other hand, prevent us from escaping such optimization?

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:*

- ➢ What are Facebook's "surface traits" and what is, according to Foer, its true essence? Does algorithmic thinking inhabit the outer level or the inner core of this "carefully managed top-down system"?
- ➢ Algorithms are sometimes built recursively. Do you see evidence of a recursive process in the constituency of the ideal lifestyle and the ideal career as described by Tolentino and Ho?
- ➢ What may be the obstacles to algorithmic thinking, and how are these obstacles removed?

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 (as outlined in the attached "Style Guide"). Title your paper. Submit your paper electronically via Sakai's "Assignments." Email submissions are not acceptable.