SPEED DATING ESSAY WRITING

In this activity, we will be drafting papers in five minutes. Yes, that's right, five.
Wouldn't it be awesome if you could write all your papers in five minutes?

Step 1 (2 minutes)

1. **Read** your prompt.
2. **State your gut instinct position** on the concept in the prompt.
3. **Write a *thesis* statement** for the prompt, which includes your position and some explanation of that gut instinct.

Step 2 & 3 (1 minute each)

1. **Read the prompt and the thesis statement** you are given.
2. **Add at least one piece of *evidence* in support of the thesis** that has been written for you.
   Evidence can be any of the following and must be specific:
   – arguments made in readings from our class
   – Biblical resources
   – statistical data you've learned about
   – logical arguments
   – anecdotes/personal stories

Step 4 (1 minute)

1. **Read the prompt, thesis, and evidence** that have already been drafted.
2. **Now, write a *counterargument*.** State the opposing viewpoint and acknowledge one or more of its arguments—*but,* draw the attention back to your position with an "although" or "however" statement.

Step 5 (5 minutes)

Join together with the other people who ended with the same prompt to discuss. What were the strongest arguments? What was the most helpful evidence?

Prompt A

"Reparations is not only a political response but a Christian response to a history of racial oppression that has lingering effects on the present" (Keri Day). Agree or disagree with this statement.

Step 1a. **What is your immediate gut instinct response to the question?** (one sentence)

Step 1b. **Can you explain why you have the gut instinct response you have? What worries you about the *opposite* view?** (one sentence)

Step 1c. **Draft ONE thesis sentence that *names* your position and *gives a reason for* it** (one sentence)

Step 2. **What evidence can you use to back up the thesis? How does it support the thesis?**
Examples: arguments made in readings from our class; Biblical resources; statistical data you've learned about; logical arguments; anecdotes/personal stories

Step 3. **What ADDITIONAL evidence can you use to back up the thesis? How does it support the thesis?**
Examples: arguments made in readings from our class; Biblical resources; statistical data you've learned about; logical arguments; anecdotes/personal stories

Step 4a. **What about *your* view might worry people with the *opposite* view?** (one sentence)

Step 4b. **What might you say about those worries?** (one sentence)
Strategies: → "here's reasons you don't have to worry about that as much as you might think."
→ "the evidence shows that that worry is not a real problem."
→ "here's why that concern is real, *but* not as important as my concern."

Prompt B

The parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) is often heralded as a biblical story about the ethical imperative to care for strangers. What political implications might this story have for contemporary debates about __reparations__?

Step 1a. **What is your immediate gut instinct response to the question?** (one sentence)

Step 1b. **Can you explain why you have the gut instinct response you have? What worries you about the *opposite* view?** (one sentence)

Step 1c. **Draft ONE thesis sentence that *names* your position and *explains* it** (one sentence)

Step 2. **What evidence can you use to back up the thesis? How does it support the thesis?**
Examples: arguments made in readings from our class; Biblical resources; statistical data you've learned about; logical arguments; anecdotes/personal stories

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Prompt C

"I fear that the celebration of Martin Luther King's birthday as a 'national holiday' is the attempt to separate King from the church he served and loved" (Stanley Hauerwas). To what extent can the ideals of the civil rights movement be separated from King's religious convictions?

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Step 1c. **Draft ONE thesis sentence that *names* your position and *explains* it** (one sentence)

Step 2. **What evidence can you use to back up the thesis? How does it support the thesis?**
Examples: arguments made in readings from our class; Biblical resources; statistical data you've learned about; logical arguments; anecdotes/personal stories

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Prompt D

What insights might Christian ethics offer current debates about injustice, diversity, and inclusion at Princeton University?

Step 1a. **What is your immediate gut instinct response to the question?** (one sentence)

Step 1b. **Can you explain why you have the gut instinct response you have? What worries you about the *opposite* view?** (one sentence)

Step 1c. **Draft ONE thesis sentence that *names* your position and *explains* it** (one sentence)

Step 2. **What evidence can you use to back up the thesis? How does it support the thesis?**
Examples: arguments made in readings from our class; Biblical resources; statistical data you've learned about; logical arguments; anecdotes/personal stories

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Step 3. **What ADDITIONAL evidence can you use to back up the thesis? How does it support the thesis?**
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Prompt E

Is Wolfhart Pannenberg's view that Christians can learn about God and about morality from interreligious dialogue at odds with Stanley Hauerwas' insistence on the particularity of Christian ethics? What does this tension (or lack thereof) tell us about the nature and place of interreligious dialogue in religion and politics?

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Step 1c. **Draft ONE thesis sentence that** *names* **your position and** *explains* **it** (one sentence)

Step 2. **What evidence can you use to back up the thesis? How does it support the thesis?**
Examples: arguments made in readings from our class; Biblical resources; statistical data you've learned about; logical arguments; anecdotes/personal stories

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