

Marlowe Daly-Galeano
Lewis-Clark State College
English 277
American Literature I
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Community Engagement--Thoreau Bicentennial Assignment

You will see that there is quite a bit of Henry David Thoreau on this syllabus. There's a reason for that! July 12, 2017, was the 200th anniversary of Thoreau's birth. Birthday celebrations have been going on throughout the year to honor this important writer. Have you seen the commemorative Thoreau stamps? They're part of the celebration. Our class will be involved in part of this international celebration by showing a brand-new documentary on Thoreau: *Henry David Thoreau: Surveyor of the Soul*. It is **mandatory** that you attend this screening, which will take place **on the evening of November 2**. Make sure to clear your schedule for that evening. If you have a schedule conflict, talk to me right away. As a class we will host the event and the film director, Huey. This will involve publicizing the event by designing flyers and press releases, creating a program, hosting the director, and facilitating a brief discussion following the screening of the film. You should know that I will be sharing our experience with the community of Thoreau enthusiasts around the world.

Following the event, you will write a paper in which you reflect on how you and your community participated in the worldwide celebration of Thoreau's birthday. Your reflection must respond to the following questions:

- 1) What was your specific role in hosting the screening of *Henry David Thoreau: Surveyor of the Soul*?
- 2) How did the community react to the event? Do you think it was successful? Why or why not?
- 3) In what ways is Thoreau relevant to today's issues?
- 4) How did being involved in the bicentennial celebration affect the way you think about Thoreau's writing, the study of literature, or your role in your community?

You do not need to address the questions in this order or one at a time, as long as you cover all of them in your reflective paper. The recommended length for this assignment is 500-1500 words, but you will not be penalized if your paper falls outside that length, as long as you address the four questions. The paper should be MLA formatted, and if you cite any outside sources, a Works Cited page is required. The paper will be graded based on the thoughtfulness and thoroughness of your responses to the questions and the quality of your writing.