

Department Final Examination
English 250
Fall 2006

Name _____
Social Security # _____
Instructor's Name _____

DIRECTIONS:

Part I: Reading (30 minutes)

- 1) You will have 30 minutes to read the passage on the reverse side of this page.
 - Feel free to circle/underline key concepts and make notes in the margins.
 - Make sure you fully understand the author's argument.
 - Decide whether or not you agree with the author's main points.
 - Use scratch paper or the space in the margins to brainstorm and prewrite.
 - You may use a dictionary to look up any words you don't know.
 - You may NOT begin writing in your bluebook during this portion of the exam.

Part II: Writing (70 minutes)

- 1) Before beginning to write, make sure you understand the required format.
 - Use blue or black ink.
 - Use the large bluebook provided to you by the exam proctors.
 - Skip lines when you write your essay.
 - Write on only one side of each page.
- 2) You will have 70 minutes to write a well-developed essay in your blue book(s). A well-developed essay generally consists of an introduction, at least three body paragraphs, and a conclusion.
 - Use the inside cover or first page of your bluebook if you need to prewrite some more.
 - Collect your thoughts before you begin writing. Take a deep breath and relax!

- In your introduction, summarize the author's argument and then state (in a thesis) to what extent you agree or disagree with his/her point of view.
- Then, in your body, support your thesis with clear logic as well as examples from your own experiences or observations.

- 3) When you are done writing, review your essay and make any necessary changes. Proofread for mistakes such as run-ons, comma splices and fragments.
 - To make changes, draw a line through unwanted words and write the new words above the old.
 - To add information, either use the space between the lines or draw an arrow indicating you will use the back of the page.

May 1st Matters by Casey Tellez

May 1st, 2006 was an incredible day in US history. No matter where you work, where you live, or what color your skin, May 1st matters. Whether or not you support HR 4437—the bill designed to close the Mexican border through military force, mass deportations, and felony criminalization of illegal immigrants—is irrelevant. Although the bill catalyzed the day's protests, marches, rallies, and boycotts, May 1st is significant for much larger reasons. In some cities called "A Day Without a Mexican," May 1st forced Americans to realize the importance of immigrants as schools, restaurants, fields, factories, and construction sites shut down. This historic day brought much-needed energy to the American labor movement and hope to an apathetic nation.

On this day, 1.5 million people refused to work, attend school, or shop, creating mass awareness of how immigrants are vital to our lives. Agricultural production in Florida and California came to a halt, and the nation's three largest meatpacking plants closed in the Midwest. Los Angeles and Long Beach ports shut down as truckers went on strike. Restaurant owners who chose to stay open had to bus their own tables and do their own dishes. People in wealthy neighborhoods had to deal with missing nannies, maids, and gardeners. Americans watching the news coverage on every channel learned that 14% of the country's workforce consists of immigrants who are responsible for one-half of the last decade's employment growth. Thousands of Americans finally realized that they too depend on this crucial population which has been too often overlooked.

More workers took action on May 1st, 2006 than during the last eight years combined. The labor movement has been declining during the past decade, and this day brought unions much-needed life. With the largest strike of any kind in US history, unions for hotel workers, truckers, field workers, manufacturers, food workers, and teachers supported this grassroots movement and gained increased participation. The people who work the hardest in this country often face the worst injustices, and now, labor unions are better positioned to address issues such as lack of health care, retirement, and livable wages. Field workers, for example, are paid less than they were in the 1970s (considering inflation) while CEOs are paid more than double. Americans need to fight for their rights as workers, and May 1st provided hope that labor unions do indeed have power.

Perhaps most importantly, May 1st brought apathetic Americans to life. People got off the couch, turned off the TV, and took time from their busy schedules to care about the world around them. Thousands of high school and college students joined massive student walkouts in numbers that haven't been seen since the late 60s. Working people who have never rallied, marched, or boycotted anything hit the streets in amazing numbers in over 200 American cities. Places like San Rafael, San Jose, and Fresno witnessed the largest protests in their cities' histories with marches that stretched for miles. In Watsonville, over one-quarter of the town's population hit the streets, from grandparents to working parents to college students to children. People who have never stood up for their rights stood tall on this amazing day, and Americans realized that they have a voice.

Not since the height of Cesar Chavez's farm worker strikes has our country seen uprisings like those of May 1st, 2006. Witnesses were awestruck by this historic day in which immigrants gained respect and appreciation for their labor, which our country depends upon. Workers of all types now have a greater ability to fight for their rights, and people of all backgrounds now know that they too can make a difference.