ESSAY ON COMING OF AGE IN MISSISSIPPI

FIRST, READ CAREFULLY THE DIRECTIONS ON BOTH SIDES OF THIS PAPER. I subtract points if you do not follow any of the directions. Be sure to ask me if you have any questions about anything connected with this essay.

SOURCES FOR THE ESSAY
Use only Coming of Age in Mississippi and, if you wish, other readings assigned in this class and/or a U.S. history textbook as references. Do NOT use any discussion of the book by other authors, whether published or on a website. I shall be grading your paper only on how effectively you interpreted the material in Moody’s book. Use material from class readings other than Moody only in connection to the points you are trying to make about the book (to set the context and/or compare to other historical experiences). Indicate in your introductory paragraph what question you are discussing and back up all of your generalizations with specific evidence from varied sections of the book (not just from a few chapters).

POSSIBLE TOPICS
Discuss one of the following topics (or, with permission, another topic) connected to Coming of Age in Mississippi by Anne Moody as a general guideline for your paper. Indicate in some way what question you are discussing. With my permission, you may narrow down or otherwise adapt a question as long as your essay includes some discussion of material from most of the chapters, convincing me that you have read the entire book. I subtract points if a paper includes material from only one or two chapters.
1. What are the most important lessons readers can learn from Anne Moody’s memoir?
2. What were the most important lessons Anne Moody learned (or should have learned) as she grew up, went to school, and became a civil rights activist?
3. How was Moody’s life affected by either her race, her sex, or her economic status and/or how did she try to make up for these problems?
4. Who were the people in Moody’s life who helped her or people close to her the most and how did they do this?
5. What were the different ways in which interactions between white and black people affected the life of Anne Moody and those close to her?
6. How did divisions within the black communities of Mississippi discussed by Anne Moody affect her and other members of these communities?

TECHNICAL GUIDELINES:
1. The paper should be 4-7 pages long, with page numbers, and typed double-spaced unless you have special permission to write it by hand. I will not accept papers sent by email or on a computer disk. Use an average size font and one inch margins and do not skip a line between paragraphs. Please do not use a folder. You may use a title page if you wish, but it is not necessary. Considering the possibility of papers getting lost, you should make a photocopy so that you can have a clean copy to keep.
2. The assignment should be written in good essay form, with an introduction, a coherent discussion of the issues, and a conclusion. Make a list of the basic points you want to make, put them in the most logical order, and then use a revised version of that list as an outline for writing. If you have trouble getting started, try writing a casual email to yourself about your thoughts about the topic. It is usually best not to try to write the introductory paragraph before you have written much or all of the rest of the essay, but do what works best for you.
3. Make it clear in your introductory paragraph what question you are discussing. With my permission, you may narrow down, otherwise adapt a question, or create a new one as long as you follow all of the other directions.
4. Make any criticisms of the book that you think are relevant. It is fine to give your personal
reactions to the material as long as you also discuss it as a historian trying to be as objective.
5. Give specific examples from THROUGHOUT the book (not just a couple of chapters) as
evidence for generalizations whenever possible, but you do not have to give every detail of every
example, only information that helps make your point.
6. Put all direct quotes in quotation marks, but avoid using a lot of direct quotes, especially those
by the author (as opposed to quotes from primary sources that she uses). Paraphrase unless you
have a special point that requires the exact words. Do not use any references not assigned in this
class and especially avoid materials on websites.
7. Anytime you are referring to a particular segment of specific information (not only when it is a
direct quote) from a book or handout, include a reference in parentheses [i.e., (Moody, 53) or
(Woloch, 136)] after the sentence or paragraph including the information or quote. YOU DO
NOT NEED TO USE ENDNOTES OR FOOTNOTES BUT YOU DO HAVE TO GIVE
APPROPRIATE PAGE NUMBERS FOR ANY SPECIFIC INFORMATION.
8. If I find any evidence that you have plagiarized (used someone else's words without quotation
marks and a page number and/or paraphrased someone else's ideas without crediting them),
whether from a published or an unpublished source, you will receive a zero and will not be
allowed to redo the paper. If you are uncertain about whether something is plagiarism, check
with me.
9. Your paper will always be better if you start writing soon enough to ask for help if you
discover you need it and do several drafts. Rewriting helps!
10. You may contact the Writing Center by phone, email, or in person for advice about basic
writing problems.
11. Contact me by phone, email, or in person about any problems.

VOCABULARY FOR BREAD GIVERS
SHTETL - a small Jewish town or village in Eastern Europe
TALMUDIC SCHOLAR - an expert on sacred Jewish writings
THE TALMUD - sacred Jewish writings made up of the Pentateuch (also the first five books of
the Old Testament), the Mishnah, and the Gemara
THE TORAH - sacred literature of the Jewish religion
HEBREW - an old Semitic (Middle Eastern) language spoken today by Israelis and having its
own alphabet
YIDDISH - a German dialect spoken by many European and European-American Jews which is
written in the Hebrew alphabet
ELLIS ISLAND - an island in New York harbor which was used from 1892 to 1954 for
processing immigrants to the United States
THE GHETTO - a section of a city in which certain people are forced to live, particularly Jews in
Europe
AMERICANIZATION - teaching immigrants to behave like "ordinary" (non-immigrant, Anglo-
Saxon) Americans; assimilation into American culture
GREENHORN - a new immigrant who is not yet "Americanized"