**Honors Humanities**

***Candide***

Read Voltaire’s satirical novella, *Candide*. For each section, write a brief essay that **identifies**, **explains**, and **provides** **examples** of the themes that are explored, the satire that is employed, and the allusions to historical events that are made within the section. Some ideas are listed below, but you may find other connections. **Cite textual evidence and any other historical research you conducted. Add four Membean words each due date.**

**Read this PDF version of *Candide*:**

[**http://ocw.mit.edu/courses/literature/21l-448j-darwin-and-design-fall-2003/readings/lecture4.pdf**](http://ocw.mit.edu/courses/literature/21l-448j-darwin-and-design-fall-2003/readings/lecture4.pdf)

**SECTIONS**

1. Ch. 1-10 – set in Europe **due Wednesday, January 25.**
2. Ch. 11-20 - voyage to and travels across South America **due Monday, January30.**
3. Ch. 21-30 - set in the Old World **due Friday, February 3.**

**THEMES (Explain how the quotes support the theme.)**

* **OPTIMISM** *Voltaire’s satire of philosophical optimism is one of the major issues of Candide. Throughout the story, satirical references to “the best of all possible worlds” contrast with natural catastrophes and human wrongdoings.*
* **THE PROBLEM OF EVIL** *Evil, in its many forms, is something that Candide must constantly confront. Candide is always questioning how and why such evils exist.*
* **THE ROLE OF FATE OR PROVIDENCE** *In Candide, Voltaire attacks not only the blanket optimism of Dr. Pangloss, but the religious notion of providence, the idea that there is a divine will guiding earthly events. The fact that good and bad alike suffer and die seems to be evidence that God is not in charge.*
* *In denying providence as a beneficent guiding principle, Voltaire appears to be saying that either no rational pattern exists in the world, or, if it does, it is not readily evident to human beings.*
* **FREE WILL** *The idea of free will is closely tied to the theme of fate. Candide raises the question of an individual’s control over his own destiny. A long-standing debate among philosophers is whether man is predestined to a certain fate, and, if he is, what happens to free will and moral choice?*
* **AN ATTACK ON RELIGION** *The hypocrisy of religion, especially that of the Roman Catholic Church, is a recurrent theme in Candide. But other religions — Protestantism, Judaism, Islam — also receive the sting of Voltaire’s wit.*
* **THE IMPORTANCE OF WORK** *The theme of work and its beneficent effects is announced as the antidote to “boredom, vice, and poverty.” Work is essential to attain the contentment.*

**SATIRE (Explain the social ill that Voltaire wishes to expose by using the technique.)**

* Hyperbole
* Understatement
* Irony
* Faulty logic

**HISTORICAL PARALLELS (Explain Voltaire’s social commentary by alluding to certain events.)**

* Seven Years War
* El Dorado
* Lisbon
* Absolute Monarchies
* Inquisition
* John Locke
* Thomas More
* Gottfried Leibniz