Paper 2: Packinghouse Daughter

This is the second (and last) essay assignment. It is due at the beginning of class on July 30. This paper is worth 20% of your grade, so please read the instructions and the essay questions carefully.

Instructions

Choose one of the following questions to craft a 3-page essay. Keep the following in mind:

• Your essay should be typed, double-spaced, with 12-point-font and one-inch margins.
• The pages should be stapled together.
• The title of your paper, your name and student ID should be on a front cover page (do not put your name elsewhere on the paper).
• Organize your thoughts before you begin so as to create a coherent, well-organized, and persuasive piece of writing. Your grade will depend upon the essay's specificity, comprehensiveness, and clarity.
• Cite your sources according to any standard citations—either footnotes or in-text citations are fine. Your paper should include a bibliography or references cited section.
• Be sure to check the quality of your writing: thesis statement, clarity of prose, correctness of grammar and spelling, etc. (See the backside of this page for more information).

Essay Questions

Packinghouse Daughter by Cheri Register is a memoir of growing up in Albert Lea in the 1950s. Register’s father was an employee at Wilson & Co. packinghouse during a strike. This memoir covers this important period in her adolescence and her own reflections on class, the labor movement, and historical memory. We will also watch the documentary, American Dreams, about the Austin Hormel strike in 1985-86. This story, seen through the lens of a documentary filmmaker, takes viewers through the Austin strike from the perspective of many different stakeholders.

1. Read the essays in Chapter 11 (“The 1950s “Boom”: Affluence and Anxiety”) of Major Problems by John Patrick Diggins and Stephanie Coontz. Write a paper assessing if Diggins or Coontz present a portrayal of the 1950s that fits with Register’s experience growing up and Albert Lea. You should understand both Diggins’s and Coontz’s arguments and develop a thesis that supports or critiques their analyses of the 1950s with Packinghouse Daughter.

2. Compare the Albert Lea and Austin strikes. Although neither of these strikes was very successful when compared to the original goals of the unions, the Wilson and Co. had the better outcome for the strikers. Using the information you have about these two strikes and the general mood toward labor at the time, write an essay that explains the relatively better outcome of the Albert Lea strike. Consider the role of the government, the situation of the companies, and the people involved.
3. Using *Packinghouse Daughter*, *American Dreams* and documents from *Major Problems* analyze the changes in workers demands over the twentieth century. Are workers basically making the same requests or have their demands changed? If things have changed, what has changed? If things have remained the same, why are they the same?

4. Create your own topic. The only restrictions are that you write on *Packinghouse Daughter*, use another source (such as *The Jungle* or other primary source), and your topic must be approved in advance, by Thursday, July 24.

**Essay evaluation**

Content:
- Introduction is clear and concise, with a clear thesis.
- Conclusion is coherent and summarizes the main arguments and analysis.
- Paper flows in a coherent order.
- Intro and conclusion support each other.
- Argument is supported with evidence.
- Demonstrates understanding of the material.
- Shows insightful, critical thinking about the material.
- Factual accuracy: names, dates, details are correct.
- Sources are properly cited.
- Uses evidence from *Packinghouse Daughter* and another source (*Major Problems* or *American Dreams*).

Mechanics:
- Spelling is correct.
- Language: good word usage, avoidance of colloquialisms.
- Sentence structure is clear with correct grammar.
- Uses paragraphs to separate ideas (a good paragraph generally has between three and seven sentences).
- Makes proper use of quotes.
- Adheres to the requirements of the assignment.