

For this assignment, you will need to write a 3-5 page paper that explores both your ideas and some current research on one of the following topics. Your paper should be typed (in 12 point font) and double-spaced. It should also include a Works Cited page that lists **four** outside sources. At least two of the four sources must be “print” sources (from newspapers, magazines or academic journals). Three of the four sources must either be quoted or referenced in the body of your paper. In addition to these four outside sources, you may also wish to quote from the articles we have read for class.

1. Recent popular "reality" shows like *American Idol*, *Survivor*, and *Boot Camp* all have elements within them dealing with conformity, community, and individualism. Pick a show and explore how the individuals of a particular season deal with these issues. As you do this, consider what we've learned about Obedience and Authority. You might also discuss why you think these shows are so popular. What about them are people responding to?
2. Discuss the practice of hazing on modern college campuses in America. To what extent does “groupthink” and “obedience to authority” influence a) individuals who haze and b) individuals who allow themselves to be violently initiated into a special society? As you explore these complex psychological relationships, you might consider how an individual might resist or reject the tradition of hazing without being expelled from the group.
3. What happened at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq in 2003-2004? Briefly discuss the events that occurred there, and then provide a thought-provoking argument about the ways in which military traditions of “obedience to authority” may have influenced these events. To what standard of personal responsibility should the American officers be held for what happened? (For example, *The Washington Post* presented documents saying that General Ricardo Sanchez, the senior U.S. military officer in Iraq, authorized the use of a number of extreme measures of interrogation.) Are all individuals always completely responsible for their immoral actions? Are some individuals less responsible because they have been specifically trained to obey orders? Discuss.
4. Given that communities, cultures and societies require a certain amount of obedience to authority in order to exist, where can we draw the line between blind, dangerous obedience and proper, acceptable obedience? When does obedience to an authority become a problem rather than the proper way to live one's life? (Remember that obeying the speed limit, sending your children to school, paying taxes, accepting elected leaders, etc. are all elements of authority that we accept (?) without question). Where is the proper place for (or what is the proper amount of) disobedience in one's life? How does one determine the difference between rational and irrational authority in one's personal life?