Mr. Pelz

<u>**The Things They Carried In-Class Essay**</u>

<u>**General Directions**</u>:

Make sure your essay:
- ✓ **Addresses the chosen topic**
- ✓ **Is unified by a clearly stated thesis** and a narrowed focus
- ✓ **Is well-developed with supporting examples, specifics, or details**
- ✓ **Integrates at least <u>one citation</u> from a reading referenced in the chosen topic <u>per body paragraph</u>.** You may use the article on lying, Tim O'Brien's statement or Oliver Stone's statement.
- ✓ You are required to have a minimum of **3 body paragraphs, an intro and conclusion.**

Question Choice #1

In an essay about war memoirs, writer Clayton W. Lewis questions O'Brien's decision to present "the nightmare [he] faced in a Vietnam rice paddy" as fiction. Lewis believes that some of O'Brien's stories "dissolve into clever artifice (deception)" and, therefore, are not as effective as actual memoirs of the Vietnam experience would be. He concludes that "for all its brilliance and emotional grounding, [the stories do not] satisfy one's appetite to hear what happened rendered as it was experienced and remembered."

Do you think Lewis has a point? Or do you think O'Brien's "artifice" communicates his emotions and experiences more effectively than a straightforward memoir could? Use your understanding of why Tim O'Brien wrote *The Things They Carried* to either agree or disagree with Lewis's point.

Question Choice #2

At the end of the film *Platoon*, Chris, the film's main character, reflects as he is evacuated:

"Looking back, we did not fight the enemy, we fought ourselves - and the enemy was within us... The war is over for me now, but it will always be there - the rest of my days... Be that as it may, those of us who did make it have an obligation to build again - to teach to others what we know and to try with what's left of our lives to find goodness and meaning to this life."

Write an essay that argues whether Tim O'Brien and Oliver Stone have used their respective fictional accounts of the Vietnam War to achieve this goal and how you came to your conclusion. Be sure to include commentary on what we can learn from their respective failures or successes.

Mr. P's ESSAY GRADING RUBRIC

Checks indicate that work is needed on the checked item.

A 90-100pts	**This essay is clearly superior and shows insight and engagement with the topic. It is well written, clearly organized, insightful and technically (mechanics) superior. In addition, the essay exhibits most or all of the following characteristics:** **Introductory paragraph:** - Captures the reader's attention by using a relevant attention grabber/snappy start. - Smoothly transitions from attention grabber to main idea of thesis. - Thesis has purpose (so what?), makes an argument (what), and explains how it will be proved (how). - Introduction mentions the novel, its author, and the families to be discussed. - Introduction does a good job of setting up the paper as a whole **Body paragraphs:** - Topic sentences explain which piece of evidence will be used and what it will be used for. - Topic sentence connects back to thesis – includes purpose (so what). - Provides adequate background information and context for an uninformed reader to be able to understand the evidence without simply summarizing - Uses well selected quotes as required for the assignment from the text that directly supports the thesis - Provides analysis that explains the quote and sets evidence up for interpretation - Provides interpretation of how evidence directly supports the thesis - Convinces reader that interpretation is reasonable and accurate. - Essay is organized and contains transitions between ideas, quotes, and paragraphs. - All interpretation and passages directly support the thesis. **Conclusion** - Revisits the main idea of the thesis without restating it. - Reaches a new insight (revisit "so what?" with more depth). **Skills & Mechanics:** - Eliminates spelling/wrong word errors. Evidence of spell check/revision. - Uses a consistent verb tense, and eliminates personal pronouns ("I," "me," etc.). - Grammar/Punctuation errors are minimized. - Contractions eliminated - Correctly uses MLA document formatting - Quoted references are cited and punctuated correctly. - Phrasing of ideas is smooth and well articulated
B 80-89 pts	**This essay is clearly above average. It is still well written and thoughtful, but has not done a superior job with the above items that are checked.**
C 70-79 pts	**This essay is less well written than the essays above. It meets minimal expectations, but it may not have done a thorough job with items listed above and/or it may exhibit some of the following characteristics:** - It may be less interesting and informative, more superficial and less insightful. - Analysis and/or support may be vague and/or unclear. - Essay may not be organized in a coherent fashion. - Mechanical errors detract from the essay.
D 60-69 pts	**This essay maintains the general idea of the writing assignment but fails to meet the minimal expectations and exhibits one or more of the following characteristics:** - It is weak in content, thought, language facility, or the conventions of written English; the mechanical errors garble its message. - This essay has not been proofread. - Essay does not accurately represent the novel.
F 0-59 pts	**Essays in this category show little evidence of preparation, thought, or effort. This essay may also show lack of adherence to assignment directions.**

Final essay score: **_____/100**
Rough Draft + Edits   **_____/20**
Total Points: **_____/120**