How to turn this in:  **Submit this essay** (25% of course grade) on Moodle **by 5:00 p.m. Saturday, Mar. 9** (soft due date) or by **Mar. 16,** saved as a .docx or .pdf file.  You are welcome to use the TurnItIn tool *before* the due date to check for accidental plagiarism.

Assignment information:  **Two topic options are below.**  The **goal** is to build a convincing argument using materials assigned or provided in our course.  No additional research is needed.
   The **end product** is an argumentative essay that directly responds to the assigned question. Support your position with well-explained evidence from course readings.

Technical requirements:  Your essay must be **1500-2000 words, including citations**, which totals about 5-7 pages in Times New Roman 12-point font with one-inch margins.  **Since you are using course texts, there is no need for a bibliography**; give abbreviated citations of sources in footnotes following this pattern:

   Examples of abbreviated sources in footnotes                 What to include
1. Ormand, *Controlling Desires*, pp. 279-280.      (author, book/chapter title, page numbers)
2. Galatians 3:26-28 (NRSV).                  (biblical book, chapter, verses, translation if quoting)
3. Jerome, *Against Jovinian* 1.3.           (ancient author if known, title of work, section numbers)
4. Class lecture, Feb. 10.                      (you can cite notes from discussions this way too)

Option 1 question:  **Did early Christians have a binary gender system?**

For this option, write a **formal academic essay** that answers the question with a clear thesis statement and supports the statement with evidence from course texts.  As your **audience**, picture a classmate outside our course; include very brief orientation to the texts as you seek to persuade your imagined reader.  **Draw on as many texts as possible, discussing at least three in detail**.

Option 2 question:  **Does the brief newspaper article below accurately represent the content, context, and historical interpretation of biblical passages?**

For this option, write a **formal, polished essay** accessible to a broad public audience (outside of academia).  As your **audience**, picture a layperson who wonders if claims in news media accurately convey what the Bible says about same-gender sexuality.  Respond by writing about a 2003 article from a Canadian newspaper, *The Guelph Mercury:* "Why Conservative Christians' Obsession with Homosexuality Not Likely to Wane" (see file on Moodle)—the article is older but succinctly describes arguments about sexuality and the Bible that still circulate.  **Give a clear answer to the question above and draw from at least five course sources (using both primary and secondary sources) to make your case and inform your reader.**  Include what a reader of the newspaper article should know about this debated area, such as problematic assumptions expressed in the article, relevant issues in biblical texts/interpretation that add nuance, or historical information that can expand readers' picture of ancient societies.

**Grading rubric for mid-semester paper**

|  | NC | MC | CR | CD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Clarity of argument** | ▪ Paper reflects on a different topic than the assigned options<br><br>▪ Shows little grasp of course-related issues<br><br>▪ Does not offer an argument | ▪ Position on the question missing or only implied<br><br>▪ Shows partial grasp of issues<br><br>▪ Reader has to reread paper in order to follow the argument | ▪ Position on the question is clear<br><br>▪ Shows strong grasp of course issues<br><br>▪ Reader can easily follow the organization of the argument | ▪ Position on the question is clear<br><br>▪ Shows very advanced grasp of course issues<br><br>▪ Reader can easily follow the organization of the full argument |
| **Use of sources** | ▪ Draws on no sources or hardly any evidence from sources<br><br>▪ Little sign of comprehension of texts<br><br>▪ Texts absent | ▪ Draws on fewer texts than required number<br><br>▪ Leaves textual comprehension very unclear<br><br>▪ Texts' role in paper is unclear | ▪ Draws on multiple texts<br><br>▪ Shows comprehension of multiple texts<br><br>▪ The selected texts directly serve argument | ▪ Draws on multiple texts<br><br>▪ Shows advanced comprehension of texts<br><br>▪ Texts skillfully serve argument |
| **Smoothness of writing** | ▪ Writing style is hard to interpret<br><br>▪ Very few ideas are expressed<br><br>▪ Errors make reading difficult | ▪ Writing style is very informal<br><br>▪ Reader must do extra work to understand ideas<br><br>▪ Errors slow the reader's pace | ▪ Uses formal, polished prose<br><br>▪ Guides reader smoothly through the ideas<br><br>▪ Free of nearly all typing errors | ▪ Uses formal, polished prose<br><br>▪ Guides reader smoothly and eloquently throughout paper<br><br>▪ Free of errors |
| **Technical requirements** | ▪ File is not turned in or can't be opened<br><br>▪ Content is too brief to earn MC<br><br>▪ Citations of texts are not provided | ▪ File format creates obstacles<br><br>▪ Is more than 2000 or fewer than 1500 words<br><br>▪ Citations give too much or too little information | ▪ Turned in as openable file<br><br>▪ Stays within the required length range<br><br>▪ Citations are in the assigned format | ▪ Turned in as openable file<br><br>▪ Stays within the required length range<br><br>▪ Citations are in the assigned format |