HIST 131 Short Paper – Gilded Age Inequality

The aim of this first paper is for you to take some of the work that you have been doing at home and in the classroom, and apply it in order to produce a piece of written work that demonstrates your analytical and writing abilities.

Length: 2 paragraphs (about 400-600 words).
Due Date: Saturday, February 18, before midnight.

Sources

- William Graham Sumner, What Social Classes Owe to Each Other (1883)
- Henry George, An Analysis of the Crime of Poverty (1885)

Assignment

The Gilded Age of the late nineteenth century was a period of incredible economic growth and prosperity in the United States, but it was also a period of increasingly visible poverty and inequality. Many Americans began to debate about the causes of poverty and inequality, as well as about what solutions, if any, were required to deal with these issues.

Read the documents by Carnegie, Sumner, and George carefully, and then write a two-paragraph paper discussing and analyzing:

1) their arguments about the nature and causes of poverty and inequality, and
2) their arguments about how the United States should confront these issues.

Use one paragraph for each of these two main issues. Each paragraph should begin with a clear and coherent TOPIC SENTENCE that identifies the main point or the main argument of the paragraph.

In constructing your paragraphs, remember that this is not simply an exercise in summarizing. While some summary of each author’s argument may be necessary, you should move beyond summary in order to compare and contrast the ideas of each author, and to offer a SYNTHESIS of their key arguments.

Do NOT simply summarize one document after the other.

Your paper should demonstrate a clear and smooth TRANSITION from the first paragraph to the second. That is, it should be clear to your reader that the two paragraphs have some topical connection, and that, while each one deals with a different aspect of the topic, they are both dealing with the same overall subject.

You do NOT need a separate introduction or conclusion. Just focus on making these two paragraphs as strong as possible.
**General Instructions**

*Take care with your writing.* Choose your words and construct your sentences carefully, and proofread your work before submission. Clarity of writing will be taken into consideration when grading your paper. Papers that demonstrate spelling, grammar, punctuation, or sentence construction problems may suffer reduced grades.

*Use only the documents provided.* Do NOT visit the library, or the internet. The aim of this paper is to test your ability to analyze and discuss the three documents that we have all read and discussed together in class.

*Use your own words.* Plagiarism is unacceptable. If you are confused about what constitutes plagiarism, consult the library’s guide, or ask the instructor.

*You do not need citations.* You would benefit from mentioning the three authors by name in your paper, but you do not need footnotes or other references in your paper.

*Do not use quotations.* You should be able to write your paper without using any quotations from the documents. One of the skills we are developing here is the ability to explain complex ideas in your own words.

**Format and Submission**

*Length:* Your paper should be two paragraphs (about 400-600 words) long. While I will not penalize students who write slightly over the word limit, you should make an effort to keep within the prescribed word count.

*Format:* Submit your paper in one of the following formats:

- .doc; .docx;
- .odt .pdf
- .rtf .txt

*Do NOT use the Apple .pages format to submit your paper.*

*Submission:* Submit your paper through the TurnItIn link provided on Cougar Courses. You will receive a TurnItIn submission number. Please record this number.

*Due Date:* Saturday, February 18, by 11.59 p.m. No late submissions will be accepted.