**RUBRIC**

**Beginning of Semester Statement of Beliefs**

This essay is worth **12** points. Don’t directly penalized students for poor writing (e.g., grammatical or spelling errors, run-on sentences) … but if their writing is not clear, of course their grade may suffer. Essays turned in up to one week late receive no more than **6** points; those turned in more than a week late will be read and will receive feedback but will get **0** points. We don’t accept papers any way other than Canvas.

We should not grade based on *what* students say … we should grade based on whether students took the assignment seriously and answered the questions coherently, completely, and to the best of their ability.

For each question **a**, **b**, and **e** below, students can earn a maximum of **2** points. For questions **c** and **d** below, students can earn a maximum of 3 points. (For late assignments, they can only earn a maximum of half credit for each question.) Give full credit if they answer every part of multi-part questions; give partial credit if they only answer some sections of multi-part questions; give no credit if they don’t answer the question, don’t offer a coherent answer, or don’t seem to take it seriously.

Papers need to be approximately 2,000 words (which is about 3 single spaced pages with 12-point font and 1” margins). If the paper is too short, then their answers are not likely to be very complete. Deduct points from specific questions/answers for lack of completeness. That is, don’t just deduct points for brevity … deduct for inadequate content (which will come with brevity).

The Questions:

* 1. **What kind of education did you experience from when you were born until today?**

Consider all the schools you have ever attended, the teachers you have ever had, and other educational influences in your life (e.g., churches, family, coaches). What kinds of schools did you have? What kind of teachers did you have?

* 1. **Did you have more opportunities than most people in the United States … or fewer?**

Did you have better quality schools and teachers … or worse? In what ways did you have better opportunities, teachers, schools, etc.? In what ways did you have worse?

* 1. **How were your educational opportunities and experiences influenced by:**
  2. Where you happened to live (i.e., what city, suburb, or neighborhood you lived in, whether you lived in a rural, suburban, or urban area, etc.) when you were growing up?
  3. How much money your family had while you were growing up?
  4. Your racial or ethnic background and your country of birth?
  5. Your gender?
  6. Your sexual orientation?
  7. **Why have you been successful in your education?**

To what extent have your educational successes — you’ve all made it to college, so you’re all successful to some extent! — been because of:

1. Your own merits (e.g., your own hard work, intelligence, and perseverance)?
2. Having certain personal attributes (e.g., being female, being gay, being Latina, being disabled)?
3. Luck or chance (e.g., being in the right place at the right time, being born to the right family)?
   1. **Can anybody succeed in their education in America if they just try hard enough?**

Many people argue that anybody—regardless of their gender or race/ethnicity or other attributes and regardless of the family they were born to—can succeed in America’s schools and education system if they just work hard and persevere. What do you think? Can anybody succeed in America’s schools and education system? Explain.