

Essay response to *Ralph Nader: An Unreasonable Man*

Due: Wednesday, October 3

Grading: 50 points

Assignment: Address one of the four prompts below, answering each question thoughtfully and comprehensively.

There is no set minimum word count for the essay, but high-grade work will be at least a full typewritten page. There are no right or wrong answers for this assignment, but you are required to defend the position you take. **How well you do that will dictate how highly you score on this assignment.**

Outside research is encouraged, but please be sure to **cite your sources**. Information copied without proper attribution is plagiarism, and plagiarism is the cardinal sin of scholarship.

If you missed a day (or more) of the film, see me and I'll try to get you a copy. You can rent it from Netflix, where it is also available for instant viewing online:

http://www.netflix.com/Movie/Ralph_Nader_An_Unreasonable_Man/70058893?trkid=189530&strkid=271716402_0_0

Essay prompts (choose **one** of the four below)

1. Did Ralph Nader's impact on the 2000 presidential election spoil his legacy as a progressive? What's more important in politics, the message or the result? Defend both positions that you have taken.
2. Describe in detail three of Nader's early victories for the public good. Which is most important to you personally? Why? How would our lives be different **as consumers** without Ralph Nader?
3. How was Nader able to enact progressive reform as a private citizen? Is it easier to have a strong voice of social change as a major political candidate, or as a private citizen? Justify your answer with independent research or examples from the film.
4. In the last 40 years, only two Democrats have been elected president, while national political attitudes have shifted further and further right. In your opinion, to what extent does the conservative nature of today's politics influence the work of – and the general reaction to – someone like Ralph Nader? Does someone like Nader need a more progressive national agenda, like in the Sixties, to see significant results of public reform? Will we ever see another advocate the likes of Nader? Why or why not?