

First Paper
CRP 523
Due 1 April 2009 (no fooling)

Theme: The Outlook for Middle America

You have read **CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE**. You have looked at Richard Florida's two chapters on the creative economy and the creative class. And you have learned and read about the spatial and temporal evolution of economies in the U.S., both how they evolved and consolidated over the decades, and how they have changed and re-aligned themselves. You know a lot about how regional economies change.

I want this paper to address several concerns:

First, please give me your evaluation of our economy here in the Midwest based on your interpretation of your readings plus your personal experiences and observations. Don't give me truisms and platitudes, describe what you see and what you think that it means for people, communities, and overall economic well being.

Second, Longworth, towards the end of his book has ideas that he believes will provide the opportunity for the Midwest to promote itself in a unified, shared identity manner – ideas and mechanisms for re-invigorating our social and economic standing. Please describe and evaluate those ideas so that I get a sense of your understanding of his positions and of the likelihood that those positions and ideas are practical.

Third, I want you to step back a bit and look at the whole economy and the dynamics of change going on in the United States. Tell me which of those changes offer the most and the least hope and opportunity for Midwestern economies. Tell me where you think our economy and our communities will be competitive and where they will not.

Last, I want you to predict the future. It is 2020. Look into your crystal ball and predict the major outcomes of the next decade as they impact settlement, community growth, educational choices, and business development. What will we look like a decade from now? Be creative in your thinking. What might changes in energy usage, environmental rules, lifestyle preferences, technology, or family structure suggest for us in Middle America?

I expect you to put some thought into this and prepare a well-organized paper that should be from 7 to 10 pages in length single spaced (or the default 1.15 spaced in Word). I expect for you to cite readings where pertinent and to make your case or to illustrate your ideas and conclusions. For example, after a quote put (Longworth, p. 222). Do not cite or quote me as an instructor. It is OK to use footnotes, as well, but I do want you to list your references at the end of the paper.

You will be graded on the overall quality of the writing, the organization of the thoughts, and the depth of insight and exposition that you demonstrate. Please be attentive to all of the rules of grammar and composition.