Mr. Murray Due:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Senior Theology

By opening one man’s eyes to the world… he opened his own.

Awakenings: The Reality of Miracles

Imagine what it would be like to be trapped inside a body turned to stone. Try to picture being engulfed by a sickness that has taken away 30 years of your life by putting you to sleep. Think about being deprived of movement and energy, and feel yourself as totally dependent upon others for your basic needs. Consider the burdens and blessings of life, suffering, health, and happiness as you watch the extraordinary film *Awakenings*.

The film is based on a 1973 book by Dr. Oliver Sacks, a clinical neurologist who in 1969 administered a drug called L-Dopa to a group of chronically institutionalized patients suffering from what he diagnosed as "post-encephalitis syndrome." As a result of an encounter with encephalitis during an epidemic in the 1920s, they had turned into living statues, conscious but unmoving.

Steve Zaillian's screen adaptation of the book focuses on the relationship between the shy neurologist, now called Dr. Malcolm Sayer, and Leonard Lowe, a victim of the sleeping sickness. Robin Williams and Robert De Niro give extraordinary performances as the doctor and his patient. Leonard who has been entombed in his body for 30 years and speechless is "awakened" when Dr. Sayer administers the drug L-Dopa. Miraculously his rigidity vanishes, he is able to move, talk, and feel — he's a Lazarus restored to the delights of the flesh and the multiple enchantments of the world. For a brief shining period of time, Leonard and other patients with the same syndrome at the hospital become jubilant Rip Van Winkles.

*Awakenings*, directed by Penny Marshall, celebrates the deep down joy of life and the healing exchange that can take place when the human heart transcends the obstacles of life. Leonard’s awakening, filled with awe and enthusiasm, proves a rebirth for Sayer, too, reveals life’s simple- but unutterably sweet- pleasures to the introverted doctor.

Although the side effects of the miracle drug eventually send Leonard careening helplessly back to his original state of immobility, he sticks around long enough to teach the shy Dr. Sayer and the rest of us a few important lessons about the preciousness of feeling, fantasy, risk, love, and wholeness. The story of their friendship during this emotional journey is a testament to both the tenderness of the human heart and the strength of the human soul.

**Assignment**: 3 page essay (typed) (100 pts.)

An "awakening" is a moment of clarity in which a new insight or understanding is gained. With this new awareness the experience of life is seen differently, and new possibilities are opened. Changes in patterns of thought, emotions, and behavior occur. An awakening allows the possibility of growth to new levels of psychological and spiritual maturity.

In one of the final scenes, Dr. Malcolm Sayer states- *An Awakening took place that the human spirit is more powerful than any drug. That is what needs to be nourished. Work, play, friendship, family-these are the things that matter. This is what we have forgotten. The simplest things.*

**In a detailed essay**, write about how these past 8 weeks has awakened your consciousness towards:

1. The existence of God in humanity (your life);
2. How your purpose in life is becoming more meaningful through your mission and vision for your life;
3. How college will awaken you to the reality of independence, and affect the decisions that you will be making;
4. Examine the ways in which your conscience guides you, and how this “compass” will be challenged as you transition from NDCL.
5. What are some things that you have taken for granted and that you would like to reconcile before you leave for college.

This essay should be formatted using the following model. 3 pgs, 12pt font, 1-1.5 spacing:

Student’s Name

Block

Mr. Murray

Title

Written Document example. Every night, as the dusk enters into to the silence of the night, I sit and reflect upon every word that I expressed regarding influence. Through every breath that I was blessed with, did I transform every verbalized idea as an action of living the truth in love?

or

Written Document example. Every night, as the dusk enters into to the silence of the night, I sit and reflect upon every word that I expressed regarding influence. Through every breath that I was blessed with, did I transform every verbalized idea as an action of living the truth in love?

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| **Category** | **4** | **3** | **2** | **1** |
| Purpose*Self Directed Learner* | * Establishes and maintains a clear purpose.
* Demonstrates a clear understanding of audience and task.
 | * Establishes a clear purpose.
* Demonstrates an awareness of audience and task.
 | * Establishes a purpose.
* Demonstrates some awareness of audience and task.
 | * Does not establish a clear purpose.
* Demonstrates minimal awareness of audience and task.
 |
| Organization*Self Directed Learner* | * Well organized from beginning to end.
* Logical progression of ideas
* Clear focus.
* Fluent,clearly relates to the student's goals. It includes several supporting details and/or examples.
 | * Organized from beginning to end.
* relates to the student's goals. It provides 1-2 supporting details and/or examples.
 | * A few inconsistencies in unity and/or coherence.
* Goal are vague.
* No details and/or examples are given.
 | * Serious errors in organization.
* Thought patterns are difficult, if not impossible to follow.
* has little or nothing to do with the student's goals.
 |
| Content & Detail*Knowledgeable Person* | * Effective, vivid, explicit, accurate and/or pertinent.
 | * Elaborated, accurate and appropriate.
 | * Elaborated, may contain a few inaccuracies.
 | * Random, inappropriate, inaccurate or barely apparent
 |
| Voice/Tone*Effective Communicator* | * Superior use of language
* Rich and effective vocabulary.
 | * Displays competence in the use of language.
* Effective vocabulary.
 | * A few words are used incorrectly or inappropriately.
* Uses appropriate vocabulary.
 | * Some words are used incorrectly or inappropriately.
* Limited and/or repetitious vocabulary.
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| Usage, Mechanics Grammar*Effective Communicator* | * Demonstrates strong control of standard writing conventions.
* Uses them effectively to enhance communication.
* Errors are minor.
 | * Demonstrates good control of standard writing conventions.
* May be a few errors
 | * Demonstrates reasonable control of standard writing.
* May be several errors.
 | * Demonstrates little or no control of standard writing conventions.
* Errors are severe and frequent.
 |
| Understanding*Knowledgeable Person* | * Shows a comprehensive understanding of topic.
* Exhibits ideas that are developed in depth.
 | * Shows a working understanding of the topic.
* Develops ideas.
 | * Shows an understanding of the topic.
* Develops ideas, but they may be limited in depth.
 | * Does not understand the topic.
* Lacks clarity of ideas.
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| --- | --- |
| Name: | Block: |
|  **Categories** | **Scoring 4** | **Scoring 3** | **Scoring 2** | **Scoring 1** |
| **Element 1.** | The existence of God in humanity (your life); |  |  |  |  |
| **Element 2.** | How your purpose in life is becoming more meaningful through your mission and vision for your life;  |  |  |  |  |
| **Element 3.** | How college will awaken you to the reality of independence, and affect the decisions that you will be making; |  |  |  |  |
| **Element 4.** | What are some things that you have taken for granted and that you would like to reconcile before you leave for college  |  |  |  |  |
| **Element 5.** | Examine the ways in which your conscience guides you, and how this “compass” will be challenged as you transition from NDCL. |  |  |  |  |
| **Element 6.** | Usage, Mechanics, Grammar |  |  |  |  |
| **OVERALL****PROJECT****SCORE** | **Overall project score is determined by adding the student’s element scores, then multiplying by 4** |  **Final Score** **/96** |  |