**This I Believe Essay**

You will be writing and explaining on personal belief in an essay. This is one of the best ways that I can get to know you and your writing skills, as well as to have you contribute to a project that is more than 50 years old. I understand how challenging this is—it requires intense self-examination, and no one else can do it for you. To guide you through this process, I offer these suggestions:

**Tell a story:** Be specific. Take your belief out of the ether and ground it in the events of your life. Consider moments when a belief was formed, tested, or changed. Think of your own experience, work and family, and tell of the things you know that no one else does. Your story need not be heart-warming or gut wrenching—it can even be funny—but it should be *real*. Make sure your story ties to the essence of your daily life philosophy and the shaping of your beliefs.

**Be brief:** Your statement should be 300-500 words.

**Name your belief**: If you can’t name it in a sentence or two, your essay might not be about belief. Also, rather than writing a list, consider focusing on a core belief.

**Be positive:** Please avoid preaching or editorializing. Write about what you do believe, not what you don’t believe. Avoid speaking in the editorial “we.” Make your essay about you! Speak in first person!

**Be personal:** Write in words or phrases that are comfortable for you to speak. We recommend you read your essay aloud to yourself several times, and each time edit it and simplify it until you find the words, tone, and story that truly echo your belief and the way you speak.

For this project, we are also guided by the original “This I Believe” series. On the following page, you will see the producers invitation to those who wrote essays in the 1950s. Their advice holds up well and we are abiding by it. Please consider it carefully in writing your piece. In introducing the original series, host Edward R. Murrow said, “Never has the need for personal philosophies of this kind been so urgent.” We would argue that the need is as great now as it was over 50 years ago.

**Assignment Components:**

-Prompt #1- 20 points

-Prompt #2- 20 points

-Outline- 20 points

-Rough Draft- 40 points

-Final Draft- 100 points

**200 points possible!**