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Essay Assignment Exploring Five Topics Based on the Movie *Food, Inc.*

#### I. Lesson Plan #1: Plan for an ENC 1101 class.

1. Having read Brian Eno's "The Big Here & The Long Now" and engaging in a discussion of the themes articulated in this essay, we begin to consider, in an informal way, the ways in which our various practices of consumption align us with the "short" or with the "long" sense of time and value—and ultimately the extent to which we are living/consuming consciously or are simply being manipulated to consume. We discuss the concept of "sustainability," which is a brand-new concept for most students at MDC. We discuss—still informally—the extent to which we know our own natural environments, the extent to which we know where our food comes from, the extent to which we know what's in our food.

2. After two (more or less) classes of discussion, I show the movie *Food, Inc.*, after having told the students that they will be responsible for understanding and responding to the *information* presented in the film as well as the *techniques* of argument employed to disseminate this information. I suggest, but don't require, that they take notes.

3. Following the movie, I take questions and conduct a thorough discussion of the movie. Then I assign an essay based on the movie, requiring them to refer specifically to the information presented. I require that the essay be between 6-8 fully-developed paragraphs. The topics are as follows:

1. Compare and contrast contemporary Industrial farming practices in their treatment of the earth itself, farm animals, and the human beings who produce the food;
2. In *Food, Inc.*, Joel Salatin states that "a food production system that treats its animals as though they are *things*, will also treat human beings as though there were merely things." Discuss this statement in regards to at least three of the food-production-workers depicted in this film. You may compare the lives of these industrial-farm workers with those we see working on Salatin's farm.
3. Based on this movie, what is *wrong* with the American food-production system?
4. In *Food, Inc.*, Michael Pollen says, "low economic status is the number one predictor of obesity in America today." Why, according to the film, is this true?
5. In specific language, and using references to the film, discuss at least three concepts or practices that were new to you.

4. After I have received the *Food, Inc.* response papers, I assign ENC 1101 students an "Investigative Journalism" research paper, which is their final paper for the semester.

#### II. Lesson Plan #2

This lesson plan, for an ENC 1102 class, would be essentially the same as the 1101 class except that I would require a research component as a follow-up to the information presented. This paper, written early in the semester, would serve as an "introduction" to the full-length research paper students write for ENC 1102.