

Writing Assignment #3:
Twilight and The Laramie Project

Throughout this unit, we will explore several issues surrounding race and sexual orientation in the documentary dramatic works of Anna Deavere Smith's *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992* and Moises Kaufman and the Tectonic Theatre Project's *The Laramie Project*. As part of our examination of these two texts, you will have the opportunity to (a) ponder the craft of performance theatre based on actual historic events including an analysis of what voices are included and/or excluded and (b) consider what we can learn from the words and actions of others living in communities not so different from our own.

For this writing assignment, you may choose any of the following or you may develop your own writing assignment in response to either or both of these texts. If you choose to create your own, I must approve your topic.

Writing Assignment Choices:

1. Both Anna Deavere Smith and Moises Kaufman interviewed hundreds of individuals yet chose the voices of a select few to convey a message. Write a comparison of the two texts. How is the style of both similar and/or different? What do you notice about the creators' choices in the voices they have selected? What perspectives are not shared?
2. Examine the changes or lack thereof in race relations and/or issues around sexual orientation in the United States since the beating of Rodney King and the murder of Matthew Shepard. What impact did their lives have on social, political, and/or legislative changes in the United States and perhaps even beyond? (If you'd prefer, you can focus your analysis on the changes in a particular community, like Sacramento.)
3. Conduct your own thorough interview of at least 15 people in response to a particular event of either local or national importance. Then, select at least five different voices to share with your readers in an informative yet analytical essay. If you'd prefer, you can write your own documentary drama, though you will probably need to include more than just five voices. If you choose to write a play, you must also include a Prologue and Epilogue, offering your analysis of the process of creating this text. Whichever you choose, be sure to include an analysis of why you chose the voices you did.

