Comparisons Essay

Due March 7, 2003
Introduction to Social Studies
Professor Tebeau

Assignment: Write a 4-6 page paper that compares the following types of source materials: quantitative data, especially the United States Census; oral histories, especially life histories collected by the WPA; and visual images, such as the Jacob Riis photographs that accompany How the Other Half Lives.

Your essays should address the following issues:

1. From your perspective, which of these types of documents are the best historical sources and why? What are the strengths and liabilities of each type of source material? And, how would you seek to enhance the usefulness of these types of source materials in a historical essay?

2. Of equal importance, as a teacher, which of these types of source materials would you be most likely to use in a 10th grade United States history class? Why, and what are the strengths and weaknesses of them? How might you use such primary documents to make them of utmost value to your students?

3. When drawing your conclusions, please be sure to use evidence from the various readings.

Grading of this essay will be based on the following criteria:

W  Overall writing (5 points)
E  Use of evidence to make your case (5 points)
S  Coverage of all sources and thoroughness of discussion (5 points)
T  Your overarching thesis; do you make your argument, convincingly and with vigor? (5 points)