



“This I Believe” Assignment

“This I Believe” is an organization that promotes public dialogue about belief, in their words, “one essay at a time.” The original incarnation of the program was a radio broadcast hosted by Edward R. Murrow in the 1950s and allowed people to distill into a few minutes the guiding principles by which they lived. This later became a podcast hosted by NPR, a collection of essays, and a series of books throughout the early 2000s.

Seminar 4: Personal Identity and Values will provide the foundation for our own “This I Believe” activity, which will be the only assignment to be completed by first year cadets as part of the FYE program. All will complete the assignment and then some will be allowed the opportunity to present to the group. Broadly described, the cadets’ end products will be an “artifact” through which they can communicate their values to others; this can be a written essay, spoken word, artistic interpretation, visual representation, or any other medium through which they want to share. The result will be a rich story from a small collection of individual cadets presented to their peers through the semester’s final large-group session.

Assignment

- 1) **Narrow Scope:** Take one or two of the values you identified from your in-class Values Activity and decide which you want to explore deeply and reflect upon.
- 2) **Find Inspiration:** Review the [“This I Believe” website](#) and use the “Explore” tab to search essays for a specific theme, content, or person you admire. Alternatively, you can browse the archives of NPR’s [“This I Believe” podcasts](#).
- 3) **Internalize the Value:** Consider how the value you have chosen has played a role in your life. **To what experience can you point that shaped this value?** This experience will be at the core of your reflection and the assignment.
- 4) **Project the Future:** After you have considered the past, discuss with others what you’ve been thinking about. While understanding your past and development is important, also share how you intend to use that knowledge and continue to develop your values and identity.
- 5) **Document Your Reflection:** This assignment gives you great latitude on the format of your reflection. Find the most comfortable way to articulate what you have learned from your reflection.
- 6) **Submit Your “Artifact”:** Upload the assignment by the deadline below through Microsoft Forms.

Criteria

Regardless of the medium chosen to fulfill the assignment, the submitted artifacts must address the following:

- Describe the Experience: What happened?
- Describe the Response: How did you respond to what happened?
- General Reflection: What do you think about what happened?
- Directed Reflection: What does this say about who you are?
- Demonstrate Insight: What are you planning to do with this information in the future?
- Connect to People: What do others think about this?

Guiding Resources

“This I Believe” provides the original guidance given to writers for the 1950’s essays, as well as their own submission guidelines. Both will serve you well and provide some tips on effective reflection and writing.

- [The Original Invitation from This I Believe](#)
- [This I Believe Essay Writing Suggestions](#)

Submission

- Deadline: Tuesday Small-Group Meetings **5:00pm on Tuesday, November 2**
Thursday Small-Group Meetings **5:00pm on Thursday, November 4**
- Upload: <https://forms.office.com/r/EHsC0Kned4>