**Prompt A**

All of my special interests lie within the realm of social studies, the area I intend to teach, and thus my course work has reflected that. My course work has centered so far in sociology and psychology, education as a social institution, history, macroeconomics, and human geography. While I was at University of Portland, there were a lot of courses I was required to take in certain fields, so I had a few non-western history courses, and a lot of theology. I loved all of those courses, though when I was able to choose electives, I always went for something involving sociology or psychology. I was an education major at UP, so a lot of my courses were also about education as a social institution, and what it means to become a part of it. I continued with programs similar to this as I moved to Evergreen, though with the new freedom I had to choose my path, I've moved more into psychology and sociology courses, some that combine the two, and those have been my absolute favorite. Therapy Through the Arts here at TESC, the History of Psychology at UP, even back in high school I loved AP World History and AP Human Geography. The programs I've chosen, especially at Evergreen, are ones that have encapsulated all of my favorite subjects (that all happen to lie within social studies). The classes I have enrolled for to finish up before the MiT program starts follow in this path as well, and I couldn't be more excited for them. My heart lies with the humanities, and ever since I've been able to take courses that reflect that, I've found that my passion to learn and teach has grown so much. I want to tell people about all the cool things I've learned, I want people to maybe get as excited about these subjects as I do. My coursework reflects my passions and enthusiasms, which all are part of the larger picture of social studies. I could definitely take some more courses in political science and economics to really round out my social studies understanding, but I'm not done learning yet.

**Prompt 2**

My life experience has been one of the biggest reasons for my interest in social studies. I'm Autistic, so it has always felt like I've had to do a bit more work than others might in order to understand people. What people do, why they do it, how they do it, how do others react to it— it feels like I'm separate from that sometimes, like everyone else just knows inherently and I'm constantly trying to catch up. I think this is why I started getting into history at a young age, humans do the craziest stuff, and the impact we have on each other has always interested me. As I got older, I became interested in psychology too, because again, I find the human brain absolutely insane and so confusing, it's so much fun. I've struggled with mental health as well, and part of the way I could cope was trying to understand what was going on in my brain and why. As I grew and figured out who I was and started finding the labels I identify with (whether I chose them or not), I became increasingly aware of how those labels affect my experience in the world. And beyond myself, I realized that everyone's identities have an impact. The labels people have, or don't have, affect their experience being a human. I have privilege that comes with some of my labels, like white, able-bodied. I am safe from things that others have to worry about every day. It's complicated, often unfair, a work in progress. And yet we all interact and have an impact on each other. I want to learn more about that, and I want to help others become aware, and that's only the first step. Social studies classes are where a lot of people are introduced to these concepts, which is why I want to teach here. I get to talk about what I've become so passionate about throughout my life, and I can hopefully introduce these things in a way that encourages further

exploration and learning. Plus, I will be learning from my students as much as they will learn from me. Social studies is a group effort and it takes all of us to get the best understanding.

**Prompt 3**

My understanding of this statement, that "education is both a social good and structurally unjust", is that there must be improvements. Education is essential, school is where students begin to open up to concepts beyond what they are (or aren't) introduced to at home, concepts that you need to participate in society and coexist with others. This is where people begin to find their personal interests by experiencing a wide variety of subjects, where young people in the community come together to learn. Education is something that has been fought for, for so long, to be available to everyone. But, the fact that it is available doesn't mean it is equally accessible. The system is designed to work for some, but not all. It is significantly harder for a student to succeed when they aren't safe at home, aren't economically stable, or don't have access to help outside of school. Disabled or neurodivergent students cannot participate in school in the same way as an able-bodied or neurotypical student, yet the accommodations are hardly sufficient. I think with COVID and the introduction of online learning, we have really been able to see how changes in the educational environment can affect student success. Some people have been thriving, especially disabled and ND students, who are able to engage in their own ways so much better online in a safe space with other forms of communication than speaking verbally. On the contrary, when students don't have proper internet access, or have attention issues for example, it can be virtually impossible. They are all here to learn, but the structure does not suit all of them, so many are actively dismissed and excluded. It is clearer than ever that there needs to be more accessible educational options for the different types of learners out there, and that we need to be more proactive in accommodations and financial aid and support to make sure that all students can participate in the educational system in the way that benefits them best. And there is no excuse now that we have all these online learning resources, all these new accommodations that have had to be created to support students during COVID. I know a lot of traditional teachers who are used to a certain way of doing things have had a hard time adjusting, but aspiring teachers of my generation who have experienced online learning personally can really help develop these tools. We've done school online for a few years now, we know what works and what doesn't, and we can combine in-person learning, asynchronous learning, all of these things in a way that everyone can use however they need. Just because the pandemic is maybe a teeny bit more under control does not mean that we dismiss these new tools we've created. They can be revolutionary in changing the educational structure for the better so long as we take them seriously and value them.