

Project Two: Research Essay (25% of final grade)

Your second assignment asks you to compose in an academic genre: the research essay. You will take the same problem you identified in project one and dig in deep.

Some things to consider/ways you can frame this question: What do the experts inside academia have to say about your problem? How have they defined it? What solutions do they offer? What areas have they remained silent on, and how can you push the conversation forward? Where do the experts disagree? What side are you on, ultimately? What unique contribution can you add to the conversation right now to make a difference?

As you did in the analytical essay, you will again summarize and analyze sources, with an emphasis again on analysis. Think of the research essay as your argument: your unique insight into what academic experts have to say, or have not yet said, about your problem. You will again make use of a pointed, focused thesis early in the paper, that you then sustain and support throughout your essay. Solid academic argumentation engages counterarguments and responds. How would a reasonable person disagree with your argument? How can you engage with and respond to divergent points of view in order to build an even stronger case? Beware of logical fallacies—we'll discuss these in class.

For the research paper, you must site a minimum of 10 sources, **7 of which must be peer-reviewed**, academic sources. Your sources should all be credible, meaning they make rigorous arguments and are appropriate voices for the context in which you are applying them. Note, academic sources do not include magazines, newspapers, most blogs, encyclopedias, news sites, and similar sources. These sources should be published in **peer-reviewed university presses or academic journals**.

Annotated Bibliography

In preparation for your final research essay, you will write an annotated bibliography that meets a minimum of 1,000 words (for many of you, these will be much longer, and that is fine). Think of the annotated bibliography as a polished summary of your notes on each of your 10 sources. Annotated bibliographies contain two components: a works cited list—we'll be using MLA format—the bibliography) and your thoughtful notes of summary, analysis, and reflection (annotation). Your annotations should engage in what you find useful and how you might respond to or use the text in formulating your overall argument. See the Purdue OWL pages on annotated bibliographies for samples and how-tos. We'll be looking at examples of this text in class together, too.

The final research essay will be a minimum of 1,750 polished words and is due by Monday, April 1st (sorry y'all, not an April Fools joke). The annotated bibliography must meet a minimum of 1,000 polished words and is due by February 27th.

Theory of Writing

You will also compose a 250-word 'theory of writing' articulating what you learned about your writing process and what it takes to produce critical research. Below are the questions you should be asking yourself in regards to the Theory of Writing:

- What has changed from draft two to draft three?

- How many hours did you spend on project two?
- What works well in this project/What are you proud of?
- Given more time, what would you change/What are your weaknesses?
- What was your ultimate comfort level using sources? Was incorporating outside research difficult, or work well?
- Did you learn anything new about your writing process? Did anything change from project one to project two?

Project 2: Research Essay: 250 pts total

To earn a passing grade, student must: hit word count (at least 1750); use 10 sources, at least 7 peer-reviewed; include a thesis, evidence, and counterargument; include three drafts; and meet a minimum of C standards.

*Add or subtract 1/3 grade (B to B-/B+) based on the theory of writing, idea being that I want to reward students who are considering right questions (thesis, evidence, sound argumentation, MLA) even if they aren't able to put these skills into practice yet; and likewise, if the student isn't asking the key questions we've focused on, this should be reflected in the grade as well.