Paper 1: Synthesis Essay

Due: October 7th by 7pm on Blackboard

Peer Review Draft Due: Oct. 5th in Class

The purpose of this assignment is to encourage you to articulate what TWO class readings argue about a particular topic in order to understand what point, or perhaps conversation, that they are making about this topic. This assignment also requires you to summarize and connect two assigned readings using quoted and paraphrased material with citations to support your thesis about your chosen readings’ arguments using APA format.

This paper should be 3-4 pages with the minimum being 3 FULL pages.

**Formulating Your Essay**

Because this is an introductory essay assignment, your TWO sources will be limited to assigned class readings. You may write about the Mack and Grody essays, the Bogues and Dyson essays or the Dyson and Warshow essays. ***No outside sources will be accepted***. You will incorporate the quoting, summary and interpretive skills from this assignment into the later essays that you will write in this course.

*The Structure*

This paper will include the standard elements of an essay—an introduction, body and conclusion.

For this particular assignment, the introduction should include an opening statement and roughly 1-2 sentences that show how your sources relate to each other and your thesis (either through brief summaries or an identification of shared themes/arguments). Your thesis should be the last sentence of that paragraph.

For the body section, each paragraph should begin with a topic sentence that states what the paragraph’s main idea is and then include supporting evidence (e.g. quotes) and analysis of that evidence that supports your thesis.

The conclusion should explain what the authors collectively proved about their shared topic.

*The Thesis*

I would like your paper to answer the following questions: what is these authors’ shared, meaning common, belief about a particular topic, and why do they have this common belief?

***NOTE:*** Please do not analyze the visual or musical examples presented in the class discussions that are *not* mentioned or examined in the assigned essays. You are expected to analyze the relevant supporting evidence that the authors use to support their arguments or beliefs (i.e. thesis statements) that ultimately support YOUR thesis.

## Other Requirements

* Clear Thesis Statement at the End of the Introduction (That is where I will look for it.)
* Introduction and Conclusion
* Well-Developed Paragraphs with Concrete and Realistic Supporting Evidence Supporting Your Thesis
* Clear Organization (Including Clear and Accurate Topic Sentences and Transitions)
* Cover Page Following APA Style
* Proper APA Citations
* Works Cited Page
* Avoid Contractions (examples: can’t, isn’t) and Passive Voice (examples: has had, have had)
* Other Formatting Requirements Stated in Your Syllabus such as Font Size and Margins

## Deadlines

Your peer review draft for this assignment will be due on October 5th in class. It should be at least 3-4 paragraphs long, and please bring 1 (preferably printed out) copy for your group to critique.

Your final draft for this assignment will be due on Blackboard by 7pm on October 7th.

Please submit your papers in a Word or Rich Text file. *Otherwise, I will not be able to open and grade them*.

**Paper One: Synthesis Essay**

Our first essay will build upon our class discussions and exercises by asking you to produce a synthesis/analysis of two of the texts we have read this semester.

Begin by selecting the articles you would like to focus on. I would recommend choosing the articles that relate most closely to your anticipated research project—for example, if you are thinking about writing on a research topic related to video games, you might consider comparing the essays by Krpata and Leonard. Once you have identified the articles you will be using in your paper, you will want to follow steps similar to those outlined below:

1. Review reading #1 to understand its central argument, its supporting claims, and the evidence it uses to support those claims.
2. Review reading #2 to understand its central argument, its supporting claims, and the evidence it uses to support those claims.
3. Once you have a clear understanding of each reading, move towards a comparison of the essays. What common ideas/topics do they address? What similarities or differences are there in their approaches to these common ideas/topics? What are their major points of agreement? What are their major points of difference?
4. Move from these general questions towards a statement (or series of statements) that explains how these separate readings relate to each other. For example, do you find one essay to be more compelling or persuasive than the other? Why? This is your preliminary thesis.
5. Once you have developed your preliminary thesis, prepare a tentative outline, including the textual evidence (in the form of summaries, paraphrases, and direct quotations) you will use to support your analysis.
6. Draft your three to four page essay, and then revise after the peer workshop.
7. Edit your final draft.
8. Please keep in mind that writing is a recursive, messy process; it rarely progresses in a clear, linear manner from brainstorming to outlining to drafting to revising to editing. You may find yourself coming up with new ideas as you outline, editing as you draft, developing new outlines as you revise, etc. Some writers prefer to work with more rigid, structured frameworks, and some thrive on chaos. In the course of this project, try to reflect on your own preferences and processes as an academic writer.

**Important Dates**

Peer Workshop:

Final Draft Due:

Paper 2

Rough Draft Due: November 4th (Peer Review)

Final Draft Due: November 11th on Blackboard by 7pm

The purpose of this essay is to allow you to focus on an area of your research project that you would like to investigate in order to start what will become your final research paper. You will also incorporate the quoting, summary and interpretive skills that you demonstrated in your Synthesis Essay.

This paper should be between 4-5 pages (minimum 4 full pages), and you should use three (3) sources.

**Formulating Your Essay**

For this assignment, you are allowed to use outside sources that you will find using the York Library’s online catalogue and databases (this includes articles found through the Library’s database) to find the books and articles that will best support your thesis. Any Internet sources must be approved by me in order to be used in your paper.

Your paper should provide an answer to the research question that you will pose in the first version of your Research Proposal in which the thesis will state this answer and the body paragraphs will support and analyze this answer in more detail. To formulate your thesis, I suggest rewording your research question as an answer that spells out your thesis’s main topic and explanation of that topic.

The body paragraphs should support your answer/thesis by citing and analyzing the supporting evidence from your sources. Then, the conclusion should explain what the sources collectively proved about your thesis.

Please keep in mind that I am not asking you to shrink your larger research paper down to a smaller size—your goal should be to tackle one specific section that will likely appear early on in your final research paper (such as on pages 2-4 or 5).

## Other Requirements

* Clear Thesis Statement
* Introduction and Conclusion
* Well-Developed Body Paragraphs with Concrete and Realistic Supporting Evidence
* Clear Organization (Topic Sentences and Transitions)
* At Least One Quote/Paraphrase Per Body Paragraph
* Cover Page
* Proper APA Citations and Page Headers
* Works Cited Page
* Other Formatting Requirements such as the Font Size Stated in Your Syllabus

## Deadlines

Your rough draft for this assignment will be due on November 4th in class. It should be a minimum of 3 paragraphs long (full drafts are fine too), and please bring 1 (preferably printed out) copy for your group to critique.

Your final draft for this assignment will be due on Blackboard by 7pm on November 11th.

Please submit your papers in a Word or Rich Text file. *Otherwise, I will have trouble grading them on my computer*.

**Paper 2**

Our second essay of the semester builds on the textual-engagement work you have already done, and begins laying the groundwork for your final research paper. Specifically, this assignment asks you to continue enhancing your analytical skills while generating an original argument.

Begin by revisiting your Topic Memo, and developing your initial idea into a focused, fully articulated research question. Then, break that larger question down into a series of relevant sub-questions—sub-questions that need to be answered in order for your final research project to be both comprehensive and persuasive. For example, if your research topic is about global climate change, a list of sub-questions you might consider would include: Is climate change man-made? What are the potential long term effects of climate change on the environment? Have the potential dangers of climate change been overstated, as certain critics allege? What steps can be taken to avoid or minimize the negative effects of climate change in the future? And so on.

Once you have developed and logically organized your list of sub-questions, select one or two (if they are closely related) of them to address in your multisource essay. Your essay should be anchored by a clearly stated, narrowly tailored thesis, and you should support your argument with at least three sources. One source may be drawn from readings assigned in class; the others should be the result of your own independent research. Although the multisource essay will receive its own grade (worth 15% of your total grade for the course), it can be revised and incorporated into your final research essay as you deem appropriate.

When writing the multisource essay, you will want to follow steps similar to those outlined below:

1. Revise your Topic Memo, developing your research idea into a fully-fledged research question.
2. Divide that question into constituent sub-questions; select one or two of these sub-questions to address in your multisource essay.
3. Begin researching your sub-question(s), starting with our Library Information Literacy Session.
4. Locate and evaluate a minimum of three sources relevant to your argument.
5. Drawing on your research, generate a preliminary thesis statement, as well as a tentative outline, including the textual evidence (in the form of summaries, paraphrases, and direct quotations) you will use to support your thesis.
6. Draft your four to five page essay, and then revise after the peer workshop.
7. Edit your final draft.
8. Please keep in mind that writing is a recursive, messy process; it rarely progresses in a clear, linear manner from brainstorming to outlining to drafting to revising to editing. You may find yourself coming up with new ideas as you outline, editing as you draft, developing new outlines as you revise, etc. In the course of this project, try to reflect on your own preferences and processes as an academic writer.

**Important Dates**

Peer Workshop:

Final Draft Due:

**The Research Proposal**

Now that you’ve been through the cycle of brainstorming and preliminary research, and have written your multisource paper, you are beginning to get a firm sense of the direction in which your research project is heading. Therefore, you are ready to write your formal research proposal (2-3 pages).

The research proposal should consist of five full paragraphs (at least), corresponding to the required sections outlined below:

1) **Rationale:** In a short paragraph, provide some background on the topic you are choosing. For example, why is this an important topic to research? What is generally known about it? Who might benefit from your work? Why is the topic of intellectual or social significance, and what issues are unresolved?

2) **Topic/Question and related research questions:** In this section of the proposal, you should indicate how you have narrowed your topic and what your main research question is. You should also be able to list several sub-questions that will guide your research and lay the groundwork for the organization of your paper. That is, what are some specific things you will need to find out in order to answer your big research question? If you have a logically arranged sequence of sub-questions, you are a good distance toward organizing your material.

3) **Audience and Organizational Strategy:** Who is the audience you imagine for your paper? Your paper should have a natural audience beyond your classmates: who will be interested in this topic and why? What will be the organizational strategy for this paper? How is the organizational strategy appropriate for your audience?

4) **Report of Preliminary Research:** Write a section about two important sources you have located that have helped you to define your research question. Be specific: name them and tell what each one has contributed to your thinking on the topic. (NOTE: in this section, you may not write about any articles assigned and discussed in class.)

5) **Search Strategy:** You’ve already found some sources. Where do you need to concentrate the rest of your research efforts? What gaps in your research project still need to be filled in, and how do you plan to go about finding these sources?

***Research Proposals Due:***