

ESSAY #2 SEQUENCE: RESEARCH ESSAY/COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Due Dates: Topic Proposal: 2 days after SES #8 – see p.2 for description

Library Session: SES #9

Revised Proposal: 2 days after SES #9 (see p.2)

First Version: 3 days after SES #11 (at least 8pg.) with cover letter

Workshop: SES #12

Revision: SES #18 (10-12 pg.)

Suggested length: 10-12 pg., typed, double-spaced, plus bibliography and cover letter and photo appendix. Attach to revision the marked-up first version with instructor and peer comments, the previous proposals and a revision cover letter.

This assignment is a comparative analysis research essay, which asks you to compare different perspectives on a social or ethical problem or issue. **Your primary goal as a writer in this essay is to educate your readers about different perspectives on an issue, not to advocate a point of view.** This assignment challenges you as a writer to work with and compare various perspectives and sources. We might think of “different perspectives” as contrasting lenses through which to view a social or ethical problem. These lenses might be political (e.g., comparing opposing stances on health care reform or gun control) or economic, sociological or psychological (e.g., comparing different causal explanations for homelessness in the U.S. or another country).

In your research for this essay, you should draw upon at least ten secondary academic sources such as books and journal articles. You also have the option of drawing upon your own (and others’) life experiences, community service, as well as journalistic and other popular media sources (newspapers, magazines, documentary films).

For this essay, you should also conduct an interview with someone with expertise or a particular view on an issue. For example, a student writing about health care reform might interview a health care professional (physician, nurse) or spokesperson for a health care advocacy group. Guidelines to successful interviewing will be discussed in class. In-person interviewing is best. If you are writing about an issue in another country, you can interview someone by phone or email.

In the revision, you are also asked to include documentary photographs—or other visual aids-- as an appendix to your essay. We will discuss this in class.

The writing challenges of essay #2 are:

*prewriting: defining and narrowing your topic; figuring out various angles on the issue;

*pre-writing: working with secondary sources: note-taking and summarizing;

*drafting/revising: establishing a context (social or historical) for understanding the importance of your issue; clearly, fairly and comparatively presenting different points of view, drawing upon secondary sources;

*drafting/revising: establishing an engaging style, maintaining your own voice as a writer. (“Voice” does not equal “point of view.”)

While crafting this essay, remember that your role as a writer is to educate your readership and deepen their understanding, not to advocate for a particular perspective.

Pre-Essay Exercises

2 days after SES #7: Topic Proposal: Write a 1-2 pg. typed proposal with a working bibliography of at least FIVE secondary sources. In the proposal, tell the reader (a) why you’ve chosen the topic and how you identify the different perspectives (b) why you feel the topic would be interesting for a wider audience and (c) some ideas for interviewing.

SES #9: Review of proposals during library session

2 days after SES #9: Revised Proposal: Make necessary changes to your proposal (responding to comments), and add sources to the bibliography, using resources from the class library session. You should have at least TEN sources (including seven books or articles) in the revised proposal. Include a specific plan for interviewing.

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21W.730 Writing on Contemporary Issues: Social and Ethical Issues
Spring 2010

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