

**21W.730 Spring 2010      Essay #2: Comparative Analysis Essay**  
**Workshops: SES #12, 2 days after SES #12**  
**Due: Review letters (2 copies); marked-up essays**

For workshop, review each essay twice. First, read the piece aloud. Then read it silently, writing in marginal comments. Type a letter (one to one and a half pages) to each writer; make two copies of the letters. Your letters should let your fellow students know a few specific strong points in the essay, as well as two or three specific things that need work. We are interested primarily in the larger issues: voice, comparative argument, use of secondary sources and organization. We will focus secondarily on “polishing” the essay in terms of grammar, punctuation, etc. Here are some questions to consider:

1. Do the title and introduction engage you? Does the writer’s tone seem neutral? Does the writer define “keyterms” and provide enough background and context for understanding the importance of the topic? Suggest areas for improvement.
2. Does the writer adequately compare different viewpoints on the issue? Is each view fairly and equally presented? Does the organization of the comparative analysis work well? (Typically writers have two possible strategies: (a) present one side first, then the other (A/B) or alternate between positions, exploring different aspects of each (A/B/A/B...) Can you make suggestions to improve the organization? Note: a good test of a comparative analysis essay is to see if the piece can adequately educate a motivated reader about different sides of an issue.
3. Has the author chosen appropriate secondary sources representing different viewpoints? Do the sources seem credible? Has s/he integrated secondary sources well and quoted from those sources appropriately? (Are quotes too long or too short?) How can s/he could improve in this area? Are there any other secondary sources (or types of sources) that you would suggest?
4. (If applicable) Does the writer integrate the interview material well? (If the writer has not yet included the interview, you can discuss this in the workshop.)
5. How effective is the conclusion in dynamically closing the piece? Does the writer effectively stimulate reflection about different sides of the issue?
6. How can the writer strengthen the essay on the paragraph, sentence or word level? Here you might comment on such issues as paragraph cohesion (are there any paragraphs in which the sentences might be reordered?), word and sentence structure repetition, run-on sentences, and overuse of being and passive verbs.
7. Comment on visuals (graphs, photos, charts, timelines, etc.) that supplement the text. Are there any other visuals that you would suggest?

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