
Researched Essay

25% OVERALL GRADE

Overview

Formulate and defend a point of view about one of the texts we have read this semester. Begin with a question you have about one of our authors, and *seek to answer it!*

Did anything exasperate, inspire, intrigue, confuse, or baffle you? Then use research as a way to come to terms with it.

Outcomes

- Analyze, evaluate, document, and draw inferences from academic sources
- Use strategies to engage your audience
- Identify, select and analyze research methods, research questions, and evidence for a strong rhetorical situation
- Integrate scholars' ideas with your own
- Use grammatical, stylistic, and mechanical formats and conventions
- Produce an interesting, warranted research essay

Schedule

- First, write a one-paragraph proposal of your paper: what will you research, and why?
Due Thursday, **March 26**

What research question are you focusing on for this essay?

What you will gain from researching this topic?

What do you already know about the topic? In what areas will you focus your research? What are the main questions you hope to answer with your research and final paper?

- Then, compile ten sources you plan to use in MLA style, by **April 2**

Seven of the sources must be peer-reviewed journal articles

Three of the sources must be books

- Please seek help with Oxford's virtual writing center!
- Upload a draft of your essay for a peer to review by **April 14**
- Review a peer's essay by **April 16**
- Submit your research essay (specifics below) by Saturday, **April 18**

(continued, below)

Specifics

- 5-7 pages of text, double-spaced, Times New Roman 12 point font, one-inch margins
- Works Cited page, MLA style
- 8 sources required: 3 peer-reviewed journal articles / 2 sources: book chapters / 3 sources of your choice (can be visuals, interviews, podcasts, documentaries, or other scholarly sources)
- The essay, parenthetical citations, and Works Cited page must adhere to MLA style.
- Seek peer review on your essay either from a classmate, friend, or at the writing center (virtually)

Focus on Inquiry-based research:

1. What research *question* will you seek to answer in your essay?
2. What do you already know about the topic?
3. What has the scholarly conversation been on this or related issues?
4. *Why* are you interested, or why does it matter (exigency)?

Other Resources

MLA in Owl Purdue

Emory Oxford Library website

Writing Center (virtual)

Further Information

Consider the literature and themes that we have been discussing in English 255 and 256, and begin with a research question: for example, what does *Beowulf* convey about grief, mourning, or funerals? What does *Twelfth Night* suggest about the nature of disguises? How does the narrator function in *Middlemarch* to guide readers' empathy? Trace a particular image through one of the texts (veils, mirrors, books, mountains) and ask how the image functions to convey an important theme (or perhaps make it more ambiguous?).

Begin with a research question, gather feedback from your peers' perspectives on it, propose a thesis, then start researching.

Start with a strong introduction to engage your audience and make sure your paragraphs each fully develop a main point or claim.

- Remember the **“So What?”** I mark at the end of many of your essays: have you demonstrated to the reader that what you are writing matters?
- Vary your sources. **Thoroughly integrate your sources** as evidence to support your assertions. Beware of writing a single page that only cites one source.
- **Remember your audience.** What do your readers need to know about your topic? What do they need to know to understand what you are trying to say? How can you best convince them?

- **Include Counterevidence.**
- **In-text citations are crucial:** without them, I will not grade the paper.

Consider the Following:

- Is it clear in every paragraph what is “me” and what is my source? Am I using quotation marks and tags clearly?
 - Am I citing *everything* that is from a source?
 - Are all the sources I cite in the Works Cited?
 - Am I backing claims with evidence? (Or logical fallacies?)
 - Are my claims warranted?
 - Have I included counter evidence?
 - Is my prose strong (sentence variety, strong verbs, limited prepositional phrases)?
- And mechanics...
- Are my paragraphs unified (do they present and develop one main idea?)
 - Have I read the paper out loud to hear awkward wording?
 - Do I avoid the second person “you” and the collective first person “we”?

Evaluation

I will return your papers within a week. You may revise your essays within a week from receiving feedback, email it to me, and I will average the two grades. All revisions must be submitted with a cover letter (see syllabus).