

RESEARCH PAPER

TOPIC SELECTION: For this research paper, students will select an interesting and controversial topic – a topic about which intelligent people have differing opinions. A topic must be one that has received public scrutiny and is socially relevant. There is debate going on, and you must enter the debate.

A list of suitable and unsuitable topics will be provided. Every given topic can easily be the basis of a well-written argumentative research paper. Students should select topics that fall under one or more of the General Subject Areas provided for this research assignment.

Papers written using a topic not related to this list, or on topics specifically noted in class as unacceptable, will not be accepted for grade. Topics must be current and in the news.

The exact topic you choose to examine in your research paper is ultimately up to you, **with instructor approval**. Reasons for deciding upon a specific subject may be professional and/or personal. You are encouraged to develop an idea for an approved topic that blends well with **your** educational interests. In other words, your research questions should lead you to get answers to something that interests you.

METHODOLOGY: Whatever your individual focus for this paper, you will be basing your writing on thorough research and your interpretations of that research. Just having charts and/or tables of information is not enough. Just having direct quotations is not enough. What does the researched information mean? What is your **purpose** in writing on this **subject**? Who is the **audience** for this information you are presenting? What do you want the audience to do with the information? Ask yourself, did you really say anything, or did you just present the facts as you found them? **Apply the “So What” Rule! If you do not comment on the included research, you do not have a research paper!**

As you proceed with your topic exploration, you will first do basic research to examine current thoughts and expert opinions on the topic, along with the history of the topic. After you have done some research, you should decide what **your opinion** is on the topic. Next, you will select the best arguments for your position – all the while realizing that intelligent people could take the other side about the same issue. You should find that there are good research-based arguments to be made on either side of the issue you have chosen. You will have to acknowledge those “other sides” within your paper. To be clear, **you must include ideas and opinions with which you do not agree.** You must first acknowledge, and then argue against those opposing views. **Any essay without opposing views is incomplete.**

STYLE NOTES:

1. Even though you are taking a side and arguing your opinion, **the paper must be written objectively, in third person voice.** No uses of “I” or “you” in a research paper! Do not say, “I think that” Just write what it is you think, based upon the research presented. (Talk with me about including short personal narratives as examples, if they apply to your topic.)
2. **You may not write using contractions.** The only contractions can be those within a direct quote.
3. You must have a **blend of direct and indirect quotes, all cited.**

ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING: Acceptable arguments for this research paper are based on logic, not emotion or personal beliefs. **We will spend a great deal of class time reviewing this style of writing. Taking notes, reading handouts, and reading *The Little Seagull Handbook* will be mandatory. It is the writer’s responsibility to use course resources!**

Argumentative Research Paper Assignment

For this Research Paper, you will be arguing your stance on a given topic. The topic you choose must be current, socially-relevant, newsworthy, and debatable. You must enter the debate!

Good arguments are based on logic and good specific evidence. But, no argument exists in a vacuum, independent of attitudes, opinions, and perceptions.

As such, and since your text for the course is about social thought, some aspect, major or minor, of your paper must address this issue of public opinion and perception in making your argument.

Public perception, public opinion, public reception, public rejection, public reaction, and public action must be included in your argument. That means, as you conduct your research, be sure you are seeing the public voices on your topic. You must include some of these voices and viewpoints in your paper – the viewpoints that agree with you, and those that do not agree with you.

The ultimate focus of the paper is up to each writer, but the focus must fall under at least one of the General Subject Areas provided. Your job is to come up with an issue to argue for or against, that falls under a General Subject Area. You are also being given a listing of topics that are off limits, and are not to be used.

You are encouraged to think about potential focus areas that fall within a **General Subject Area**. Every student must be able to explain the connection between his or her focused idea, and the **General Subject Area** under which that idea falls.

All students will have topics approved by the instructor BEFORE attempting the paper. See the date for final topic approval, noted in other documents. However, topics will NOT be approved before research is done to establish the existence of a current debate and some of the views involved.

Remember, you are writing an argument, so you should have a topic that allows for the presentation of all sides of the issue, from an academic research-based standpoint. You are going to take a stand on the issue yourself, and that stand (your **Claim**) must also be based upon your academic research, not on the personal or moral convictions you already hold.

Also, every writer must find a way to use *So You've Been Publicly Shamed* as a source.

Every writer's final topic must fall under at least one of the following General Subject Areas:

1. Public Shaming
2. Social Justice
3. Free Speech/Anonymity
4. Reputation Management/Right to Be Forgotten
5. Internet Use and Criminal Consequences
6. Social Media Regulations and Restrictions
7. Online Ethics ✕
8. Privacy in the Digital World/Issues of Personal Safety

RESEARCH: You must have at least 7 (seven) different resources that you have cited in your paper and that you have included on your Works Cited page(s). One of your sources must be our textbook, *So You've Been Publicly Shamed*.

You are required to use a combination of publications, periodicals, and online resources. Be sure to use more than one database. Evaluate your sources carefully, and use well-respected ones. The quality of the resources used is the responsibility of each writer!

Dictionaries and encyclopedia may be used, but do NOT count toward the seven required research sources. They can be additional sources, only, as per MLA.

Wikipedia, About.com, ProCon.org, and other such generic resources may be used by a writer for personal background information, but may NOT be used as a citable research source in any paper!

DOCUMENTATION: A paper without proper and complete documentation (BOTH in-text and Works Cited) will NOT be graded, beyond the final grade of zero. No exceptions made.

You **MUST USE** the format of the MLA. We will continue to go over this in class, but you should familiarize yourself with the MLA style of documentation. Do not just rely on citation information from an article, or from a citation generator. Know how to document correctly for yourselves.

As you already have discovered, following MLA style documentation is not hard, but it is time consuming. You are expected to put in the effort and get it right for the purposes of your writing. You can get help with your citations, but no one will totally do them for you. It's up to you to try BEFORE asking for help.

FORMAT: You must follow the MLA style for typing your Research Paper, including using the insert header formatting for typing page numbers. Be careful with the Works Cited page(s). Follow the standard heading format, as shown in your syllabus. Save your work in a ".doc" format.

LENGTH: At least six (6) and no more than ten (10) full pages of double-spaced text, in Times New Roman 12-point font size and default margins.

Note: Tables and/or charts are additional materials, and NOT part of your text.

Works Cited Pages are NOT included in page counts. However, they are numbered consecutively with your entire paper, and should be part of your paper.

Works Cited pages submitted as separate documents **WILL NOT** be considered part of a paper. Each writer is responsible for submitting one research paper, complete with Works Cited already included. A separated Works Cited section means a submitted paper is not complete, and will not be graded. No exceptions will be made.

no cite generators

OTHER IMPORTANT DETAILS:

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Research Paper Assigned: March 27, 2018

Library Sources Discussed: March 29, 2018

Research Paper Topics DUE: April 5, 2018 (Can be discussed prior to this date)

Research Paper Consultations/Work Sessions– March 28, 29, April 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12, and 24, 2018

Research Paper Draft Defenses: April 17, 18, 19, 2018

Annotated Bibliography DUE: April 12, 2018

Research Paper Outlines DUE: April 12, 2018

Research Paper Introduction with Thesis DUE: April 14, 2018 – Submit as an Assignment to Bb by 11:59 p.m.!

Research Paper Final In-Class Consultations: April 24, 2018

Research Paper DUE: Submit as Assignment to Bb before April 25 class start time
I will not take papers only emailed to me directly for this assignment!

9. Social Media Campaigns
10. Civil Rights/Civil Movements
11. Discrimination/Bias
12. Health and Wellness
13. Mob Mentality/Peer Pressure
14. Use of Drones or Spambots
15. Use of Body Cameras or CCTV
16. Plagiarism
17. Social/Digital Media Use in Education

Reminder: As stated earlier, you are writing a **research-based argumentative essay**. Choose your topic with that purpose in mind. Can you find effective and unbiased research on the topic? Can you take a stance on the topic? You have to know what you want your audience to do with the information you present. Think about the fact that you will be arguing for something, such as the need for change, or the need for no change to occur regarding your chosen topic. You will have to know what the current situations are for your topic, what potential alternatives to the current situation are, and what you recommend and why.

In order to be an effective writer, you need to be an effective researcher. Do not attempt to settle on a topic until you have familiarized yourself with it, including doing some investigation on the history of the topic so that you know why things are the way they are today, and where they can go tomorrow. In your argument, you will have to present the “yesterday, today, and tomorrow” of your topic. And, do not forget you will have to argue for or against something related to your topic, so make sure you have a stance that you can explain and defend.

You are writing an argument, so you need a topic that allows for the presentation of all sides of the issue, from an academic research-based standpoint. You are going to take a stand on the issue yourself, and that stand must also be based upon your academic research, not on the personal or moral convictions you already hold.

Off-Topics List – The following are topics that are not acceptable to use for this argumentative research paper. No exceptions will be made.

Euthanasia
Religious-based issues (Including creationism)
Human cloning
Teaching of sex ed. and/or abstinence ed. in schools
Sports issues – steroids, cheating, and/or athlete salaries
Any past or current U.S. military conflict or involvement
Immigration – includes border laws/proposals
Military issues, including the need for the draft or ROTC

Capital punishment
Abortion
Stem cell research
Vaccinations
Gun laws
Hazing (teams, fraternities, sororities)
Legalization of marijuana