Research essay

Due:  

*Draft 1:* ~1000 words (3-4 pages), by 2:00 pm, Tues., Nov. 27, **on Blackboard**
--also have your file accessible for in-class peer review (or bring printouts)

*Draft 2:* ~1500 words (4-5 pages), by 2:00 pm, Tues., Dec. 4, **on Blackboard**
--also have your file accessible for in-class peer review (or bring printouts)

*Final:* 1600-2000 words (5-8 pages), by 6:00 pm, Thurs., Dec. 13, **on Blackboard**

In recent weeks, you have been engaged in a process of exploration. You began with a research proposal in which you posed a question that was meaningful to you. In your annotated bibliography, you recorded and responded to ideas from a range of sources and perspectives. You are now ready for the culminating event: to write an essay where you report on your research, draw conclusions, and offer a persuasive argument based on evidence and reasoning.

A research essay reports the results of original research and puts it into context of the body of knowledge in a given area. Your goal in writing this essay is to express an informed argument or thesis, to try to persuade your readers to care about your findings and accept your claims in response to your guiding question.

You are writing for an audience who might be interested in your topic but who lacks your particular expertise because they have been researching other things. In other words, write the essay with me and your classmates in mind. Your role as a researcher is to deepen others’ understanding of a problem while also offering your own perspective. Present yourself as a contributor to the conversation on your topic and an expert who can fill in your audience, bring them into the discussion, and persuade them that your way of seeing the issue is reasonable.

Your essay should begin with a title, then a presentation of your research and conclusions (in the structure of introduction-body-conclusion), and a Works Cited page in MLA style.

Your essay should feature a claim supported by reasoning and evidence (the “I say”), discussion of how your claim responds to the research you have done (the “they say,” and your responses), and include an acknowledgment of your claim’s limitations or of possible counterarguments (the “naysayers”).

Successful essays will:

- Draw on numerous and varied sources -- summarized, paraphrased, and quoted as appropriate and cited according to standards of the discipline (MLA)
- Develop the argument logically and arrange their evidence in a controlled way
- Use the conventions of English effectively and avoid errors
- Show evidence of meaningful revision in each draft.
### Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria (see SLOs from course outline)</th>
<th>Exceeds standards (A to B+)</th>
<th>Meets standards (B to C)</th>
<th>Approaches standards (D)</th>
<th>Does not meet standards (F)</th>
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<tbody>
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<td><strong>Focus (2.1, 3.1)</strong></td>
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<td>Writer identifies a focused and manageable topic and research question or problem. Writer has a clear, thoughtful and substantive claim in response to the research question or problem. Writer places the claim and its significance within the context of the broader conversation going on about the topic.</td>
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<td><strong>Organization of argument and evidence</strong></td>
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<td>Writer builds a logical and clearly organized argument in support of the claim (2.6). Topic sentences unify paragraphs (2.6). Transitions clearly indicate relationships between ideas (2.6). Evidence, including quotations, is effectively introduced, explained and contextualized (2.2, 2.3, 2.4).</td>
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<td><strong>Analysis of research</strong></td>
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<td>Writer gathers numerous, varied and reliable sources to develop evidence in support of a claim (2.2, 2.6, 3.2). Writer applies source information that advances the claim (2.4, 2.5, 3.3). Writer effectively summarizes, paraphrases, and quotes from research materials (2.3, 2.4).</td>
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Writer effectively acknowledges multiple perspectives on a claim, including potential objections to the claim (3.3). Writer shows awareness of interrelationships among sources (2.5).

**Documentation (3.4)**
Writer attributes evidence to sources using MLA documentation style, including in-text citations and a Works Cited list.

**Revision (1.2)**
Writer’s work demonstrates revision for clarity, organization and depth of thought.*
(*When based on comparison of rubric scores for final version vs. initial draft)

**Editing (1.2)**
Writer effectively edits the essay; the writing does not confuse or distract.