

Extended Inquiry Project

ENG 301: Advanced Composition

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The major writing project for the course. Within guidelines provided during the semester, you will choose a topic of interest to you and of relevance to your field. The project will begin with an inquiry proposal wherein you will frame some guiding questions for your research. After you have completed your research (to be used in the Literature Review), you will decide on an argument and begin drafting a Multi-modal Researched Argument—a well reasoned argument about your topic supported by written and audio/visual/tactile components. While working on this project you will develop and polish research skills and come to better understand academic writing conventions. This project includes the Literature Review Essay, Multi-modal Researched Argument, and a Presentation.

Topic Proposal (blog post): In your topic proposal, lay out in detail your ideas for what you would like to research, including why you are interested in it, what questions you hope to answer, possible audiences, and some possible sources. This should take the form of a longer blog post, so that your classmates and I can offer suggestions and you can take inspiration from one another. More details are given on the back of this page.

Literature Review Essay: While it will stand on its own, this essay is a precursor to your Multi-modal Researched Argument. In it, you will provide an overview of what people have written about your inquiry topic, drawing from 5 to 10 relevant sources, both academic and popular. Aim for 1500 to 1800 words, not counting the works cited list.

More than a simple annotated bibliography, this review essay will need to make connections and highlight distinctions between points the reviewed texts are making and put them in context with your inquiry questions. This essay will make a point (or points) about the state of the “conversation” surrounding your topic, including pointing out gaps, inconsistencies, and places to take future work. This paper sets up your later Researched Argument.

Multi-modal Researched Argument: This essay of at least 4000 words (or the equivalent) presents your argument and the good reasons you’ve developed to back it up. The paper should make use of your research from the literature review as well as any additional source material you’ve found since then; the sources should be a blend of academic and popular and should be appropriate for your intended audience and purpose for the paper. It should include some integrated multi-modal elements (e.g. drawings, pictures, audio, video, tactile works), which will be calculated as part of the “page” value of the argument. The multi-modal component should not be a separate entity but be meaningfully integrated with the written argument.

Questions for the topic proposal

Please post your finished proposal to the course blog. You won't be locked into what you post (you can shift your topic after getting feedback), but should be ready to commit to it. It's also fine if you float a couple of ideas if you are trying to decide between two options.

When writing your proposal, answer the following:

1. *Why are you interested* in this topic? How does it relate to your selected career field, course of study, or personal interest?
2. *Who else is involved?* Who are the *stakeholders* in this topic (who else might be affected)? Who are some possible *audiences*/who else shares an interest in your topic?
3. *What do you know* about this topic already?
4. *What do you need to find out?* List out specific research questions that you want to answer.
5. What *kinds of sources* do you anticipate needing in order to adequately address this topic, and why? Include thoughts about popular and academic sources, as well as primary and secondary. Will you need to do any person-based research, such as surveys or interviews?
6. Identify *at least three preliminary scholarly sources* and a brief explanation of what each might contribute to your project. Note that you are not locked into using these sources and it's fine if you haven't read them yet—for now, it's ok to skim over some article abstracts or do some web-based “pre-search” to just get a sense of what kinds of sources are available.

Important Dates

This project will be ongoing for the rest of the semester. Here are some important due dates:

2/19 (Friday): post your topic proposal to the blog
3/3 (Thursday): draft of lit review due for peer review
3/8 (Tuesday): polished draft of lit review due
4/19 (Tuesday): complete draft of argument essay due for peer review
4/21 (Thursday): individual conferences
4/28 (Thursday): polished draft of argument essay due
5/3 & 5/5 (week before finals): presentations