

Research Project: Current Social Issues

At this point in the semester we have learned research methods, enhanced our analytical skills, and practiced multiple modes of communication. To utilize and advance these skills, you will be writing a *research-based essay that takes a position on a focused aspect of a current social issue*. You will create an annotated bibliography with your initial research, which will assist in locating and articulating the focus of and connections between the texts you use to build your argument.

You will be using books, journals, magazines, websites, and newspapers to locate the most pertinent information possible when presenting and supporting your position. Additionally, you must acknowledge and analyze at least one perspective that differs from the position you are taking within your topic. This alternative perspective may be opposite yours, or it may just be slightly different. Whatever the distinction may be, you must interpret and analyze the separation between the positions.

Lastly, for extra credit you may create a form of public discourse (letter, blog, informative booth, etc.) that aims to inform or encourage action. For example, you may write a letter to an organization that works directly with your topic, or you can perform a public demonstration (speech or picket) that relays necessary information about your topic and position.

Part One: Moodle Forum Posting and Responding (30 pts)

As a precursor to the research assignment, post a news article (or other text) in the forum section on Moodle and pose a question to your classmates. The question should stimulate thoughtful responses (ie. "What do you think?" doesn't count).

At this point you should be thinking about which social issue you would like to work with for your research project, and I highly recommend that your post be connected to the topic you are considering. The responses you receive may assist you as you begin defining your position.

- Getting started: Go to our LibGuide and browse through the databases or news sites. You may post an article, picture, comic, or video as your text. *You may also go online for this portion of the assignment.
- Posting your article: Use the "permalink" when posting your article. Also, when posting your text, remember to include a brief (2-3 sentence) summary of your article that includes the author's name, the publication, and the title.
- Responses: Your responses should fully and thoughtfully respond to the question posed and offer an additional view or perspective to the conversation. Each response should be 150-250 words.

Part Two: Annotated Bibliography (see handout for specific requirements) (60 pts)

- Four Citations and Annotations Required (200 words each)

- Book
- Journal Article
- News Article
- Website

Part Three: Research Essay (200 pts)

- Your essay must take a position on a focused portion of a large social issue. For example, “Education in America” is much too broad. A more manageable topic under “Education” may be “Education in America: The Evolving Role of the Community College” or “Classroom Diversity: How California Public Schools Support Language Learners.”
- Your polished essay must be six pages long, in MLA style, and include a works cited and consulted page.
- You are required to include at least three sources within your text that work with your position and one with another perspective.
- Your audience is academic and generally informed.

Part Four: Public Discourse (**Optional Extra Credit**) (up to 50 pts)

- Locate an outlet for the public assertion of your information
- Organize the information to meet the needs of the rhetorical situation
- Create and Engage (Submit, Perform, ect...)