

English 2010 Assignment Sequences
Department of English and Literature
Utah Valley University

Project Proposal Slideshow

Purpose

A project proposal is your first opportunity to define a topic that you will work on for the semester, share your interest in it, ask important questions, consider other viewpoints, and establish a research plan to help you complete your research and the other major assignments in this course. Beginning with a reflection on what you already know and need to know, in the Project Proposal Slideshow you then define your role and purpose in addressing the topic, setting up important questions to answer through research. After conducting preliminary research (Wikipedia would be a good starting point), you propose a tentative thesis and consider the stakes of your research.

Task

Create a 10-minute presentation using any slideshow platform (Google Slides, PowerPoint, Adobe Spark, or MS Word thumbnails, etc.). The information required should be presented in a concise and persuasive fashion and with an eye towards good design (including images) that is appropriate to your topic. Overall, you must convince your audience of your scholarly investment in the topic at hand. To that end, include at least one slide for each of the following elements:

1. Topic Summary: Name and define the topic.
2. Interest in Topic: What brought you to consider the topic? Why is it important to you? Why is it important to others?
3. Research Question(s): What do you need to know about the topic? Why do you need to know this information?
4. Working Thesis: Use what you've learned in your preliminary research to come up with your preliminary position or claim about the topic.
5. Research Plan: Generally speaking, what types of sources will be most helpful (scholarly vs. popular, older vs. newer, reports, studies, peer-reviewed journal articles, books, podcasts, documentary films, blogs, newspapers, museum exhibitions, etc.)? What key search terms or phrases promise to be useful in your upcoming research? Would it make sense for you to complete some primary research of your own?
6. Research Stakes: What are the implications of your proposed research?
7. Proposed Schedule: When will you complete the major tasks of this project? What are the major dates for completing secondary and primary research, as well as first drafts and revisions?
8. Save your Proposal Slideshow as a PPT, PPTX, or PDF file or a web link and upload it to Canvas.

How You Will Be Graded

The Project Proposal will be graded according to the following criteria:

- Summary of research topic based on preliminary research
- Description of interest in topic
- Research question(s) based on preliminary research
- Working thesis
- Detailed research plan (including types of sources and search terms)
- Stakes of proposed research
- Concise explanations
- Scholarly investment and student's interest is persuasive
- Appropriateness of design scheme, layout, and images
- Accuracy in grammar, spelling, and mechanics

Textbook Help

- "Starting Your Research," pp. 477-485
- "Project Proposals," pp. 386-390
- "Making Presentations," pp. 794-802
- "Making a Presentation/A Roadmap," pp. 803-808
- "Designing What You Write," pp. 757-775

Structured Research Notes

Purpose

Structured Research Notes (called “annotated bibliographies” by scholars and researchers) are a documented collection of published research on a topic with concise summaries and evaluations of each source. That is to say, when you write an annotated bibliography, you are doing three things: (1) documenting your sources and listing them in alphabetical order by author’s last name (or title if there is no author), (2) summarizing each source, and (3) evaluating each source by describing how the source might be useful to your project. Creating such research notes calls for the application of several important skills: informed library research, the ability to distinguish between different types of sources, an understanding of different research methodologies, close reading, and concise exposition and analysis. Research notes are also a great way for researchers to enter the academic conversation on their topic. They are often shared among scholars in various fields because they indicate the scope of a topic, organize research on a topic area, demonstrate the quality of sources, and prepare the way for future writing. Indeed, your sources and annotations from this assignment will make you an expert in your topic area and will become part of the next two papers this semester.

Task

Create an Annotated Bibliography with eight (8) published sources **reflecting a diversity of perspectives in your topic area**. At least five (5) of these sources must be scholarly, peer-reviewed sources. The other sources can be scholarly or popular. List sources alphabetically and cite them properly using the citation style your instructor has explained (MLA or APA). Beneath each citation, provide an accurate, concise, and informative annotation, in paragraph form, that addresses all of the following:

1. Author name(s), credentials, and background (briefly).
2. Type of source (report, study, peer-reviewed journal article, website, book, podcast episode, blog post, newspaper article, museum exhibition, etc.) and the main topic it addresses.
3. Summary of the source’s methodology: authors use primary research (empirical; qualitative or quantitative); or, authors refer to secondary research and offer a meta-analysis; or, authors write an interpretive essay or article in which they draw on other authors and their ideas or concepts.
4. The main thesis and/or the conclusions most pertinent to your research questions or project goals. Avoid quotations--paraphrase instead, providing correct in-text parenthetical citations. Use author tags (such as “According to X” or “As X suggests”) in every sentence of your summary to attribute these details to the author(s) of the source.
5. Any limitations or biases in the source; consider the set-up of the primary research, or the study sample, or the scope of the research. Often, researchers will address some limitations themselves in their article.
6. Evaluation of how you might use the source in your upcoming essays. Use first-person metacommentary (such as “I intend” or “I plan”) in every sentence of your evaluation to attribute these details to yourself, and not the author(s) of your source.

How You Will Be Graded

The Structured Research Notes will be graded according to the following criteria:

- Inclusion of 8 sources, at least 5 of which are scholarly
- Sources represent different views and conclusions on your semester topic
- Sources are listed alphabetically and cited correctly using proper citation style
- Annotations include author(s) name, credentials, and background; source type, main topics, methodology, summary of thesis/conclusions, limitations, and evaluation of usefulness
- Annotations use author tags and metacommentary to distinguish between information attributed to the author(s) of the source (summary) and information attributed to the student writer of the assignment (evaluation)
- Annotations are each a single paragraph (no bullet points or sentence fragments).
- Annotations are accurate, concise, and informative
- Accurate formatting, grammar, spelling, and mechanics

Textbook Help

- “Annotating a Bibliography,” pp. 529-533
- “Keeping Track: Managing Information Overload,” pp. 515-519
- “Starting your Research,” pp. 477-485
- “Finding Sources,” pp. 486-514
- “Evaluating Sources,” pp. 520-528
- “Synthesizing Ideas,” pp. 534-540

Presenting Research Perspectives

Purpose

This essay presents an opportunity to write in a more casual voice to an audience of your choice. You will provide evidence and analysis of an issue to a specific audience in an accessible way. For this class, there are three benefits to this assignment: it's a low-stakes way to think about your topic (in preparation for the formal argument you'll make at the end of the semester); it gives practice in summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting; and it's a chance to experiment with audience, stance, and style so you can rhetorically adapt to other writing situations in and beyond college.

Task

Use your proposed topic and Structured Research Notes to write a 4-6 page essay with the purpose of informing a specific audience about the variety of perspectives on your semester topic. In the next assignment you'll be making your own claims and forwarding a cohesive argument, but the objective here is simply to *summarize, inform, and analyze* the diverse views already expressed about your topic *without taking a position yourself*. First, pick a *specific* audience (this choice will dictate your next two). Then, select three (3) sources from your research representing a diversity of perspectives on the issue ensuring that each source offers something unique that adds to the complexity of the issue for your audience. Next, determine an appropriate stance (the attitude you want to take toward your topic) and style (word choice, sentence structure, and level of formality) and write an essay informing your audience about the variety of perspectives on your topic, accomplishing all of the following:

1. Briefly summarize the main point of each source
2. Highlight the key points/positions that make each source different from the others
3. Integrate details from each source using properly cited paraphrases and quotations
4. Analyze the strengths and weaknesses and/or the pros and cons of each source for your specific audience. (Even if you are drawn to one position at this point, you must consider all sides, finding both strengths and weaknesses in each source.)

Finally, include a one-page Audience Justification Statement to clarify the rhetorical appropriateness of your choices:

1. Explain what audience you chose to target and why
2. Identify specific rhetorical choices you made to appeal to your audience (such as level of formality, word choices, sentence structure, your title, your choice of sources, etc.)

How You Will Be Graded

The Rhetorical Think Piece will be graded according to the following criteria:

- 4-6 pages (double spaced)
- Diversity of perspectives presented
- Accurate, concise, and informative summary of each source
- Balance of properly cited paraphrases and quotations from each source
- Analysis of strengths and weaknesses of each source
- Clarity of audience choice

- Appropriateness of rhetorical choices for specific audience
- Audience Justification Statement
- Accurate formatting, grammar, spelling, and mechanics

Textbook Help

- “Writing Analytically,” pp. 249-251
- “Quoting, Paraphrasing, Summarizing,” pp. 541-554
- “What’s Your Style,” pp. 667-682
- “Mixing Languages and Dialects,” pp. 683-693

Final Research Paper

Purpose

In your Project Proposal, you speculated on an issue, proposing research questions, audiences, and potential claims. You then researched that issue and organized a descriptive list of eight sources in your Structured Research Notes. Next, in your paper about Presenting Research Perspectives, you analyzed the three main perspectives that surrounded your controversial issue for a specific audience. Now, it is time for you to combine all of those skills into an argument-driven research essay where you give your own perspective! For this Final Research Paper, you will make a claim or thesis, couple it with well-developed reasons and stakes, and use evidence from your research to support this claim for the scholarly audience interested in your topic.

Task

Write a 6-8 page argument-driven research essay that offers readers a full sense of your perspective and position about your semester topic. Include the following elements:

1. Begin with a clear and compelling thesis. (A good thesis makes a claim that is not too obvious, but an argument with which someone reasonable could disagree. A thesis statement should answer the research question you raised in your proposal in a concise way.)
2. In the introductory section, give a brief description of the scholarly conversation surrounding your topic and explain how your argument fits within but also carries on that conversation.
3. In your body paragraphs, develop reasons that support your main thesis and provide support for this thesis using evidence from your research.
4. Address counterarguments (or naysayers) by describing your opponents' positions fairly, making necessary concessions to any common ground you might share, and responding with a rebuttal.
5. Conclude by explaining the stakes of your argument, or why it matters to the conversation surrounding your topic. Address larger implications and concerns for potential future work or research.
6. Be sure to arrange your essay according to the type of argument you are making (see "Additional Textbook Help" below.)
7. Include a properly cited list of references at the end of your essay (not included in the page count).

How You Will Be Graded

The Final Research Paper will be graded according to the following criteria:

- 6-8 pages, double spaced (not including list of references)
- Thesis
- Organization (overall structure and paragraphing)
- Argument: claims are supported with credible evidence
- Counter-arguments are being carefully considered and acknowledged or refuted.
- Effective integration information from research (summary, paraphrase, quotation)
- Appropriateness of rhetorical choices for scholarly audience

- Proper citation style
- Accurate formatting, grammar, spelling, and mechanics

Textbook Help

- “Meeting the Expectations of Academic Writing,” pp. 35-49
- “Arguing a Position,” pp. 143-185
- “Analyzing and Constructing Arguments,” pp. 411-450
- “Strategies for Supporting an Argument,” pp. 451-473
- “Synthesizing Ideas: Moving from What Your Sources Say to What You Say,” pp. 534-540
- “Quoting, Paraphrasing, Summarizing,” pp. 541-554
- “Giving Credit, Avoiding Plagiarism,” pp. 555-562

Companion Piece

Purpose

In addition to your Final Research Paper, you will create a Companion Piece that repurposes or remixes the argument of your essay in a different genre/medium. The purpose of this additional assignment is to get you thinking about how to present your argument in a new way and for a non-scholarly audience.

Task

Create a Companion Piece that clearly expresses your topic and your argument in another genre or medium besides academic writing and for a non-scholarly audience. This Companion Piece must be an original creation. You might create a poster, protest sign, brochure, postcard, memes, t-shirt graphic, song lyrics, poem, or video. Your creativity is your only limitation!

How You Will Be Graded

The Companion Piece will be graded according to the following criteria:

- Connection to topic and argument
- Originality and creativity
- Rhetorical appropriateness of choices to genre/medium and audience
- Accurate formatting, grammar, spelling, and mechanics

Reflection Essay

Purpose

At the end of the writing process, it is always beneficial to reflect on your own terms about what you have written and the process that allowed you to complete each task. This semester, you were asked to analyze a number of texts and to write in a variety of genres. You also learned how to conduct library research, as well as how to use useful rhetorical skills that you can employ in your writing in other classes. This short essay presents an opportunity to recall your triumphs and struggles, your writing process and finished projects, and your overall learning gains in the course.

Task

Write a 2-3 page reflection essay to your instructor to reflect on your experience as an English 2010 student. You may want to consider more carefully and critically why writing matters to you as a university student. In addition, you may want to address your future goals as a writer. How will you continue to hone and practice different writing skills? Follow these specific steps in your reflection letter:

1. As a way of introducing your reflection essay, think about your writing process by completing the following statements with at least two additional explanatory sentences:
 - “I believe writing is...”
 - “I believe revising is....”
 - “I believe that writing courses are...”
2. In the rest of the letter to your instructor, address some of the following questions (you do not need to cover all of them):
 - **Review** each major assignment in your portfolio. What are the strengths and weaknesses? Which is your strongest piece of writing? Explain why it is the best and how it demonstrates what you have learned in this course. Which assignment is the weakest, and how would you change it if you could?
 - **Analyze** your writing process. Study your drafts, notes, and discussions on Canvas. Look at peer feedback responses. How did they help you revise? What was most helpful? What was not helpful, and why? Which of your instructor’s comments and suggestions were most helpful?
 - **Describe** your writing process. What strategies have been most helpful?
 - **Reflect** on your work as an author. What are you good at? What kind of writing do you like the most, and why? What kinds of writing do you struggle with, and why?
 - **Define** your goals. What have your writing assignments helped you understand about yourself as a writer? What do you want to work on in the future?

How You Will Be Graded

- 2-3 pages (double-spaced)
- Demonstration that you have thought carefully about your writing and your writing process

- Thorough consideration of writing and revision process, including instructor/peer feedback
- Claims are supported with evidence from personal experience in this class
- Reflection demonstrates your writing ability
- Careful paragraph organization creates cohesive overall structure
- Accurate formatting, grammar, spelling, and mechanics,

Textbook Help

“Reflecting on Your Writing,” p. 812