**The Research Essay**

**Purpose and Learning Objectives**

The purpose of this assignment is to practice persuasive writing and synthesis of sources. You will increase your critical thinking skills by analyzing your and others’ assumptions, evaluating multiple perspectives, and developing a clear position. Writing, research, and eloquent written expression are vital for a successful future. You will implement all of these skills in this assignment.

**Assignment Description**

For this essay, you should choose a topic from the list of opposing viewpoints provided in this unit and **write a 3 – 5 page essay that argues a clearly defined position** about that topic. The essay must follow MLA8 guidelines. **The works cited page will be an additional page.**

**The Topic**

Select your topic from the list provided in the eCampus lesson. If you wish to write on a different topic, you must have your topic approved by me before you begin the project. **Papers on unapproved topics will receive a zero.**

**These complex topics are off limits: religion, war, abortion, immigration, the death penalty, and gun control.** I reserve the right to reject any other topics that I deem unsuitable for this course and assignment.

**Guidelines**

The essay must adhere to the following guidelines:

* 1. Be formatted in correct MLA format— including header, Times New Roman 12, and double-spaced; otherwise, **10 points will be deducted from your essay’s final grade.**
  2. Have an interesting and informative title.
  3. Begin with an introduction that demonstrates the relevance of your topic, shows that it is a debatable topic, AND ends with a clear thesis statement (your position on the issue).
  4. Contain a clearly stated argument that uses reliable and well-reasoned evidence to support claims.
  5. Have several body paragraphs that each make a focused claim.
  6. **Incorporate a minimum of three or four academic sources** (peer-reviewed journals, books, and reliable web sources) to support your point.
  7. **Be sure you have at least ONE source that you disagree with in order to include a counterargument in your essay.**
  8. Include **refutation of at least one opposing argument** in a separate paragraph. (This means you will incorporate your one source that you disagree with in this paragraph!)
  9. End with a concluding paragraph that summarizes the argument’s main points and addresses the opposing point of view
  10. Include a works cited page that adheres to MLA 8 guidelines and includes in the same documents as in the essay (i.e. the in-text citations and sources listed on the works cited page must correspond!).
  11. **The rough draft must be reviewed by your instructor and the Writing Center; otherwise, 10 points will be deducted from your final grade. This rough draft is due January 2, at the latest.**
  12. The final draft will be submitted in eCampus. **Failure to upload your final draft will result in a zero.**
  13. **NO LATE ESSAYS WILL BE ACCEPTED. NO EXCEPTIONS! If you do not submit your essay on the day it is due, then you will receive a zero.**
  14. **Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is using someone else’s words or ideas without giving credit and is a serious academic offense.  It can range from --  
        
      •    Turning in a paper any part of which you did not write,   
      •    Cutting and pasting a paper together from various sources without attributing the sources correctly,  
      •    Changing a few words but basically keeping most of the words and sentence structure of the original,  
      •    Using the ideas of another without giving credit to the person who originally had the idea.  
      •    Using the exact words of the source without using quotation marks even if you give the name of the source.

**All essays will be reviewed for plagiarism via SafeAssign. Any plagiarized essay will receive a zero.**