

FINAL PROJECT: MAKING EFFECTIVE ARGUMENTS

For your final essay, you will compose an essay that makes an argument.

Length: 4-6 double-spaced pages

Total points: 200

Due Dates:

- **Friday, April 24th** – PART I/Project Proposal (25 points)
- **Wednesday, May 13th** – PART II/Argumentative Essay (150 points)
- **Friday, May 15th**—Part III/Reflection (25 points)

Upload each part of the final project the appropriate folder in D2L Assignments.

Possible topics:

- 1) With extreme social distancing measures in place, we have come to rely more heavily on digital technology for all aspects of life. How do particular technologies influence or even shape our identities (individually and/or collectively)? You may want to use Nicholas Carr’s ideas as a starting point.
- 2) Consider how aspects of identity discussed in this course (e.g. self-esteem, nature-nurture, extroversion/introversion, optimistic mindset, etc.) might shape one’s reaction to the current pandemic. How does identity—*who we are*—affect how we respond to this crisis? You may examine this question in terms of individual identity, social (political, cultural, ethnic, etc.) identity, or both.
- 3) What is the importance of self-esteem with respect to one’s identity? Draw on sources beyond the Slater piece to make your argument.
- 4) What role does introversion/extraversion play in our identity? Consider sources beyond the Cain piece.
- 5) How does negative and/or positive thinking affect our sense of self and our ability to do things? Does our mindset—be it positive or negative—affect (or effect) who we are? Utilize sources beyond the Burkeman essay to support your claim.
- 6) Consider the connection between writing and identity in digital contexts. What is the relationship between an actual person and the “self” on the page/screen? Why does it matter? Does one’s perceived *ethos* or voice (see Holdstein and Aquiline) correspond with an authentic or “real” self? Should it?
- 7) How do our individual identities relate to broader groups (e.g. political, cultural, ethnic, educational, geographic, artistic, etc.) to which we belong? How does collective/group identity shape who we are—and who we are not?
- 8) **Writer’s choice: Make an argument about any aspect of identity you wish.**

NOTE: These are just starting points. Expect to narrow these topics to delineate the particular context for *your* essay.

Choose your SOURCES:

- You are required to use a **minimum of 4 sources**, at least one of which must be peer-reviewed/academic.
 - Everyone must submit a “Works Cited” page with his/her final draft.
 - Use MLA style and formatting for all citations.
 - See the links and handouts in the “Research and Using Sources” folder for more information.
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Final Essay: Assignment Sequence

PART 1: PROJECT PROPOSAL (approx. 1 page) – 25 points

→ **DUE: Friday, April 24th by midnight**

Provide a brief preview of your project, including:

- Your topic/focus
- A working thesis statement or research question
- Why this topic? What do you want to claim/argue about it?
- A brief synopsis of your expected direction (at least a paragraph)
- Expected obstacles or difficulties

Your proposal need not exceed a single page. It can even be organized with bullet points. Just keep in mind that the synopsis (the 4th bullet point) requires more forethought, and should be longer than a couple sentences.

This is a just a starting point. You can modify your direction/focus at any time. Let your own claim(s) grow and evolve as you research and contemplate the topic.

PART 2: ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY + Works Cited page (4-6 pages) – 200 points

→ **Due: Wednesday, May 13th by midnight**

Don't make unsubstantiated claims. You are trying to convince me (your audience) that your argument is well-founded and sensible. I may not agree with everything you write. You can assume an unpopular viewpoint – just keep in mind that some positions are more difficult to advocate than others.

Ultimately, you are not graded on your opinions; you are graded on the quality of your argument.

All essays must include:

- 1) An explicitly stated **thesis statement** that makes a contestable claim or argument
- 2) A correctly formatted **Works Cited page (MLA style)** with your **4 references** (the Works Cited is not part of the page count)

Part 3: REFLECTION (1-2 pages) – 25 points

→ **Due: Friday, May 15th by midnight**

Consider the following questions:

- How did you approach your topic and make your claim?
- What were the most difficult/easiest aspects of the research essay?
- What did you learn from the research and writing process? Is there anything you would do differently?

You may also use the reflection to think back on the course as a whole (readings, concepts, etc.).