

Designed by 2016-17 WAC Fellow Heather Mir

Writing Assignment: Hard Copies Only

From the Personal to the Political

You will write a **4-6 page** essay double spaced drawing from a personal experience (if you wish) that can be connected to an issue of importance either politically, socially, or of humanitarian significance to your chosen topic. Consider some of the issues that we have or will discuss in your class from the text. It is important that your ideas and personal opinions reconnect to an issue of broader importance. We have been doing this type of thinking and discussion in class so you will have lots of practice. In simple terms, we call this the “so what” factor in your argument. **The point of this paper is that this is your chance to express your voice and develop an argument using critical thinking, and you can be as creative as you wish.** You can use personal narratives, photos, poetry etc. to help support your argument. This is your chance to explore your creative voice and then articulate it into a well-crafted argument. You can use the first person point of view if you wish.

Office Hours:

You may want to discuss your paper topics, and/or progress over your work, or how to go about crafting your argument. Please make an appointment. You can also send possible topics via email, and we can also set up a phone conference to discuss your paper.

Title:

- Create a personalized title for your paper that you think relates to your topic.

Works Cited and Research:

- Cite at least **4-5 sources** in your papers.
- Include a works cited/bibliography page.
- Specify a **format** (MLA, APA, or Chicago).

Scaffolding the Assignment:

These assignments are meant to scaffold your progression from initial ideas for your paper to the finished product.

Journal Free Writing:

- Write a 2 page double spaced journal entry that includes your interest in two current events.
- Your source(s) can be from reliable news publications (*NY Times, Time, Newsweek, The Economist, Foreign Affairs* etc.), or aggregate internet news sources.
- Summarize what the news stories are, what is important about them, and why you might feel a specific connection to each current event.
- The two stories can be related if you have a particular interest in a topic.

Constructing a Thesis Statement:

- Choose one of your news stories (or both if they are related) from your journal exercise and develop a thesis statement.
- Consider why your current event is significant to you and why it might appeal to a broader audience.
- For this assignment you are to turn in a thesis statement as well as the answers to the following prompts:

Before reading my paper, my readers might believe...

After reading my paper, my readers might feel...

Gathering Your Resources into an Annotated Bibliography:

- Construct an annotated bibliography following a specific format (MLA, APA or Chicago).
- You should have 4-5 (more if necessary) sources from news worthy publications (*NY Times, Time, Newsweek, The Economist, Foreign Affairs* etc.), aggregate news sources, or scholarly articles or books.
- Your annotations should include a brief summary of the source, why it is relevant to your paper, and particularly how it is related to your thesis statement.

Rough Draft:

- Write the first draft of your paper.
- Focus on your thesis statement and general organization of your supporting paragraphs.
- You will want a clear introduction that functions as a “roadmap” for your reader.
- Your paper should have a conclusion that sums up your argument and ties your paper back in towards your thesis.

Making a Reverse Outline and Peer Review:

- Work with a writing partner in class.
- Exchange and edit your papers.
- Work together on constructing a working outline for your paper.

Final Draft:

- You will want to focus on sentence level revisions.
- Please proofread your papers.
- I have designed a grading rubric to use as a guideline concerning your writing.
- I suggest you print your paper out in hard copy during the revision process.

Grading Rubric: Use the following as a guideline for your writing

Grade	A	B	C	D
Thesis	Thesis is clearly identified and I include the “so	I have a thesis but do not have a “so what” factor.	Thesis is not clear or fragmented within your work.	There is not an identifiable thesis.
Supporting Arguments	I have clear supporting arguments that relate directly to my thesis.	I have some supporting arguments, but it is not clear why they are relevant.	I give 1 or 3 reasons to support my thesis, but they are weak and confusing.	I don’t give any reasons to support my thesis.
Organization	My writing has a thesis, clear supporting arguments, topic sentences that relate back to my thesis,	My writing has a thesis, supporting arguments that somewhat relate back to the thesis, a middle and an end.	My writing is unorganized and jumps from one idea to the next without much connection to my thesis.	I have no direction within my writing.
Voice and Tone	It sounds like I care about my argument. I tell how I think and feel about it.	My tone is OK, but my paper could have been written by anyone.	My writing lacks personal connection and is bland. It sounds like I am faking.	My writing is too formal or informal. It sounds like I don’t care.
Word Choice	The words I use are interesting, diverse, but natural and are vivid.	My word choices are not varied, repeated or uninteresting to the reader	My word choices are dull and repetitive-or they are pretentious while cluttering my writing.	I use the same words over and over and some are even confusing.
Sentence Fluency	My sentences are clear, help support my thesis, and are varied in length.	My sentences are clear, but sometimes confusing or repetitive.	My sentences are often awkward, run-ons, or fragments.	Many run-on sentences and sentences make my essay confusing to read
Sources and Quotations	My sources are relevant to my thesis, cited properly and clear within my writing.	My sources have relevance, but are somewhat disorganized or disjointed within my writing.	I have too few or too many resources that are not relevant. My quotations are not connected.	I have little resources or direct quotations in my writing.
Conventions	I use correct grammar, punctuation, and	I have a few errors to fix, but I generally use correct	I have enough errors in my essay to distract a reader.	Numerous errors make my paper hard to read.
Format that is specific to your major field of study-ex. MLA, Chicago	I have used a format for page numbers, works cited, citations, double spaced and margins.	I have used a specific format, but there are a few mistakes in my work.	There is some use of a format but there are many mistakes and inconsistencies.	It is not clear that I have formatted my work at all.