

Additional Notes for Essay 2—the main essay for this course.

Students should come up with their own topic that will hold their interest for the 2500 words that the course requires. If the topic and resources already used for Essay 1, the Op-Ed, will work, I would urge everyone to simply enlarge the scope and use that topic. If that topic is tired, please think of some focus that is part of your program or major. If that is not a possibility, then choose a topic that you are REALLY interested in! This is not a Pro-Con paper or a neutral report on a familiar issue. This paper needs to “take a position” and defend it with energy and expert sources!

Often the best papers and the easiest to write are ones where the writer is investigating a topic they are deeply interested in, i.e. a conspiracy theory, a great mystery, a powerful idea of some sort. What does NOT work well for this paper are tired overly done topics like, abortion, euthanasia, animal rescue, social media, etc. Really. I want papers that dig into something, find great sources and expose real information that supports a strong thesis!

This main paper for the course is built on the REQUIRED stages of development that are identified on the notes page. The final documents that will make up the final evidence of the project are detailed and the timeline for them are laid out in the Essay2 notes. You can work through them at your own pace, but ALL the lead-up stages are required! If you change the topic completely, the stages will have to be re-done to account for the new focus. So please choose wisely.

The Topic Exploration exercise is VERY important. If you find you really don't have enough interest in a certain topic after Part 2, say, knowing that in time to change early on is very important! Finding a working thesis sentence from Part 6 of the exercise, is key to a good start. The thesis will likely change as you dig more into the topic; it can be “tweaked” to match the evidence you find, right up until the last. In this essay the EVIDENCE MUST BE THE GUIDE FOR THE THESIS. If you find that your early ideas aren't proved out by the facts, you must adjust the thesis to reflect that. NEVER just find facts that fit your (first, shaky?) assumptions.

Please read the online Essay2 notes carefully. Let me know if you have questions. Trying to write out everything that gets said in a classroom is weird for me, so just be in touch.

Again, if a Zoom meeting would be helpful, we can do that as long as everyone has the at-home ability to do that. I do that for another group, but it usually takes time to get everyone “in.

I hope the information in these notes helps! By Thursday I will have midterm grades posted on BOBCAT—not Bb, so if you have not submitted the OpEd zip folder, please DO IT. :-)

--Jane