

Major Assignment 4: Final Research Paper

Proposed Due Date: 11/1

What It's Worth: 200 points

"What you delete from your computer, what you take out of your prose, is as important as what you leave in. It is not a loss. When you take away that unnecessary adjective, the removal adds to the ambience surrounding that noun. When you write a page and delete the whole thing, there is a sense in which it is not deleted. The better writer who remained behind is still there. In this sense the analogy to a musician practicing scales is most apt. The point is not to create so many yards of music. The point is to create a particular kind of musician, one who, when called upon, can do what he is expected to do. Writers who throw their scraps away are not leaving a better writer behind, and that was the point, wasn't it?"

- Douglas Wilson

◆ The Purpose

The overarching goal of these major assignments is to provide a groundwork for you to write within multiple genres and for you to transfer knowledge from one genre to another throughout your college career. The devices you will use to structure your Final Research Paper (synthesizing information, finding gaps in an existing conversation, writing from a place of authentic inquiry, and fulfilling the expectations of a specific genre) will be used and applied in your other courses as well. In other words, you will be able to use the skills that you have learned here to successfully complete almost any other writing task that you encounter in your daily life and in your chosen career field.

Your Final Research Paper will analyze and contextualize your research findings for future scholars as well as pave a way forward for others to continue the conversation.

◆ The Content

The first aspect of writing a final paper that I would like to touch on is the word "final" itself. Just because this is the last major paper you will be composing in this course, that does not mean that this is the finalized version thereof. Every writing task is a process in constant development and flux. Writing reflects our thinking at a certain point in time, but we are consistently changing, learning, and growing as scholars along the way. In the future, you may want to revisit your research paper, like most professional researchers do, and add even more new knowledge to the existing conversation, but that is not something you need to concern yourself with now.

For your Final Research Paper, you will be analyzing and synthesizing your research findings with the work you have already completed throughout this course and the semester. You will contextualize your primary research results (i.e. adding and expanding on your First Draft) by addressing the specific research niche and the broader conversation you have chosen for this project. It might be a good idea to go back and take another look at a few *Stylus* articles to familiarize yourself with the style, format, and structure of a successful research paper.

In your Final Research Paper, you will be addressing the following:

1) An Introduction

This passage (or passages) will establish the relevance of your research within your specific research niche and the broader conversation surrounding your area of interest/discourse community. You will incorporate your secondary sources here and make connections between your research question and these sources. This passage (or passages) should end with a direct link to your methodology that establishes why and how your primary research methods adds new knowledge to your chosen discourse community. Go back and look at your **Statement of Significance** and your **Literature Review** for content that you can build on.

2) Your Methodology

Include a brief description of your methodology and explain why you chose this methodology in the first place. Go back and look at your **First Draft** for content that you can build on.

3) Your Results

This section (and the next section) will make up the majority of your paper. Here, you will elaborate on the discoveries you have made in your primary research. You will need to address relevant data, quotes, or artifacts to help illustrate your point. In this section, you will be presenting your findings in detail and emphasize

any remarkable results (i.e. results that were unexpected, interesting, or particularly relevant to your research question).

4) An In-Depth Discussion

This section will also make up the majority of your paper. You will analyze your results, place your results within the specific context of your research niche, cite your data and your secondary sources to illustrate these points, explain your results, and draw conclusions while also exploring options for further research. The essential aspect of this section is to look forward to alternative possibilities of research within your chosen discourse community.

Some questions to consider as you work on this section:

- What effects did your results have on the broader conversation of your chosen research niche?
- Are your results reinforced by your primary and secondary sources or do your results provide an alternative perspective to these sources?
- What factors outside of your research question might be influencing your data/analysis?
- Where might this conversation go in the future?
- Can you suggest future methods that could add more clarity to your findings?

- What other related discourse communities could benefit from similar research?

5) A Works Cited/References Page

As with most academic papers, you will list your sources with the MLA citation method.

6) Appendices

Similar to your **First Draft**, in this section, you will include any forms used during your primary research (i.e. interview transcripts, artifacts, surveys, signed informed consent forms, CITI Training Certificates, and so on). This is where you will highlight any relevant data that you have discussed. The purpose of this section is for the reader to refer to and verify your research.

◆ The Structure

The most important aspect to keep in mind as you write your Final Research Paper is that you have already done most of the work necessary for this paper in your other assignments. Revisit your previous assignments, consider the feedback you have received, and incorporate revised and edited bits and pieces into your Final Research Paper.

You can also review articles in *Stylus* for some guidance on how to successfully complete your research paper. You do not need to copy the exact style, format, or

structure of these articles, but you may find yourself modelling some of these aspects in your own paper.

The required length of your Final Research Paper is at least ten (10) pages. This may seem daunting, but I have complete faith in you. You can do this! Keep in mind that writing is fluid and recursive. Even if this draft is still a little messy, as most professional research papers tend to be, you can always come back to it in the future.

I will be assessing your paper based on broader skills that you apply. I will consider how you synthesized your sources, how you entered into an authentic conversation, how you made an effort to meet the expectations of this genre, and how you preformed these tasks and made mindful choices. As long as you address the aspects I have elaborated on above, you will satisfy the expectations of this assignment.

◆ **Additional Advice**

In most cases, the research that you will be conducting and the writing that you will be doing are predetermined by what has already been studied and said on any given topic, the audience your writing is intended for, and the expectations that accompany your chosen genre. The process of creating your Final Research Paper provides you with skills that can transfer to other writing tasks. It also immerses you within the field of writing studies and makes you more aware of certain skills you already have when it comes to crafting a specific genre for a specific audience.

We have worked together (you have done the majority of the work) to make sure that the content of your paper centers on an authentic point of inquiry. You have crafted an authentic research question and discovered a gap in the existing literature that does not yet have a satisfactory explanation. Your work is, in essence, creating new knowledge to address this gap.