

RESEARCH PROJECT ON IDENTITY

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTION

Identity is complex and multifaceted. As Tatum argues, our identities are shaped by multiple factors including our families and our environments. Our identities are also shaped by social, historical, and political contexts, and the agency we have in managing our identity is mediated by these contexts. Steele points out that the more we know of these contexts the better equipped we will be at negotiating our identity.

Thus far in class, we have explored the multiplicity of identity and the complicated social and political contexts that affect these identities. The primary goal of this project is to delve further into this investigation by learning about another group's identity (in other words, you cannot investigate an identity with which you personally identify). Since we have also explored how messages are situated within a rhetorical context where the medium of this message affects how it is interpreted, your goal is to examine this identity across three to four different media:

1. Magazines and newspapers about this identity
2. Academic research on this identity
3. Interviews on how this identity is understood
4. Optional: Visual representations of this identity

In addition to these perspectives, ***you must apply a critical lens*** (see next page) as you analyze the prevailing reports and research to critically examine what it means to have this identity.

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Find, select, and evaluate different kinds of sources
- Paraphrase, quote, and summarize primary and secondary texts in essays
- Synthesize and analyze primary and secondary sources
- Assess current interpretations and consider implications of this identity
- Compose an academic essay and apply academic writing conventions

SOURCES

For this essay, you must have **three different kinds of sources**:

1. Three to five (3-5) articles from a periodical
2. Two (2-3) articles from academic journals
3. Interviews of five to ten (5-10) students (depending on target identity)

GUIDELINES

Annotated Bibliography:

- Brief summary and reflection of each source (excluding interviews), approximately four to six pages, total
- Sources documented in MLA format

Presentation:

- Individual poster presentation of draft of project

Research Paper:

- Minimum 1,500 words, approximately 6 pages; Max 2,000 words
- In-text citations and works cited page in MLA format
- Submitted as Word file or PDF

IMPORTANT DATES

- Research question due **Thursday, March 15 or Friday, March 16**
- Library day **Thursday, March 15 or Friday, March 16**
- Annotated Bibliography due **Thursday, March 29 or Friday March 30**
- Interviews completed by **Thursday, March 29 or Friday March 30**
- Poster presentation of project draft **Week of April 2**
- Final draft of essay due **Friday, April 13** (in lieu of final)

NARROWING DOWN A RESEARCH QUESTION

For this essay, you must choose an identity and examine our current understanding of it. However, to move beyond a simple report, your examination must apply a critical lens in understanding how this identity is represented.

CRITICAL LENSES	QUESTIONS THAT LENSES HELP ASK
Ideology and rhetoric	What are the underlying assumptions and unspoken values behind the way the identity is represented? In other words, how do different people talk about this identity?
Power, diversity, and feminism	In what ways is this identity marginalized? In what ways do they have they have the agency to negotiate how their identity is interpreted? Conversely, in what ways are they subject to the gaze of others?
Economics and Labor	How is this identity represented in the work force? In what ways is their labor problematized or limited by external power structures?
Political	How do political contexts affect how this identity is interpreted? How does the political sphere influence the ways this identity has or has had access to power?
History	How has this identity changed over time? What are some ways that this identity is a product of specific historical movements?