Activism Article. The course provides an opportunity for activism in the form of a written editorial, letter to the editor, or letter to an elected official that could potentially be submitted to the publication, government office or other organization that has the capacity to make societal change. This editorial should be no longer than 500 words, and address a current topic of action based on social determinants of health. Activism article will comprise **10%** of the course grade.

How to write an activism article and/or a letter to the editor

1. **Respond to an article in the book or paper**. Begin your letter/article by citing the original story by name, date, and author.
2. **Share your expertise.** If you have relevant qualifications to the topic you're addressing be sure to include that in your letter/article. If you are a Prius owner writing about hybrid cars, or you are writing about energy issues and you have solar panels on your parents roof—share that information up front.
3. **Refer to the legislator or corporation (hospital system) you are trying to influence by name**. Be sure if you are trying to influence a legislator or corporation that you include the full name in your letter/article.
4. **Write the letter in your own words**. Be sure that you take the time to write the letter in your own words not just copy from the article what you agree with or disagree.
5. **Refute, advocate, and make a call to action**. Most letter/article to the editor follow a standard format. Open your letter by refuting/agreeing with the claim made in the original story the paper ran or the article you read. Then use the next few sentences to back up your claims and advocate for your position. Try to focus on the positive. For example: *According to the Latino Scientists, investments in renewable acculturation and assimilation would bring over $200 million to our state and create 36,000 jobs by 2020.* Then wrap your letter up by explaining what you think needs to happen now, make your call to action.

- **Keep your letter short, focused, and interesting.** In general, letter/article should be under 500 words, stay focused on one (or, at the most, two) main point(s); and get to the main point in the first two sentences. If possible, include interesting facts, relevant personal experience, and any local connections to the issue**. If your letter is longer than 500 words I will deduct 5 points.**