Research Paper

General Guidelines

COMM 1312: Writing and Research—Fall 2021—Dr. Paul Almonte

Assignment Purpose, Objectives, and Activities: The **Research Paper** should address an issue in contemporary society and join current discussions about it (by proposing a solution for a problem, suggesting a compromise among two or more positions, etc.). This paper is a form of exploration that should lead to discoveries that are new, at least to you if not to others. That is, don't simply write from what you already claim to "know." Be sure that your topic is one that requires more than just fact-reporting to answer it. In other words, this should be a subject that calls for in-depth investigation, explanation and analysis of the research you find, and persuasive presentation of your argument. The paper should ultimately provoke your readers to think about a debatable issue.

You will develop the paper through a series of steps that build upon one another: from the **Research Proposal** (a description of your topic/position and how you plan to examine it), to an **Annotated Bibliography** (the selection, presentation, and explanation of some of the sources you will be using to evidence your paper's information and argument), and your **Thesis/Outline** (presenting the initial description and structure of your paper), through to the submission of the final draft of your paper. Each of these steps will be submitted and graded. Guidelines for each will be provided.

This series of projects will help us engage with key PMU and Core Curriculum Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). They are as follows:

1. Construct well-organized, rhetorical arguments in academic essays by employing a writing process. (from idea-generation, thesis development, outlining, drafting, and revising) to develop your essay.
2. Assess the value (appropriateness and effectiveness) of sources for inclusion in an argument and/or research paper.
3. Synthesize researched evidence that supports an argument and appropriately document sources by using in-text documentation, paraphrasing, and summarizing.

Topic Selection:
As we discussed, since you'll be "living" with your topic for the semester, it is important that you take the time now to thoroughly examine your interest in and the viability of the topics you are considering. Utilize Chapter 2: Topic Selection from *Writing Research Papers: A Complete Guide* and Chapter 3: From Topics to Questions and Chapter 4: From Questions to a Problem in *The Craft of Research* to help you define and frame a topic. No topics are off-limits and we will remember to be respectful readers of each other's work, even if we disagree with a particular position someone is taking.

Basic Requirements (Structure, Length, and Formatting) and Evaluation Criteria:
I've included a standard grading rubric below. Here are the basic keys on which to focus: Provide research sources appropriate to your topic, and use those sources as evidence to support and prove your thesis (the paper must be thesis driven and have some type of argument); present writing that is mechanically clear and well-organized; demonstrate awareness/use of argument structures or styles (we will discuss specific forms of argument presented in our textbooks in the coming weeks). Start with a well thought out introduction that provides the reader with necessary background information about the topic. All body paragraphs must be focused and organized, clearly relating back to your thesis. Sum up your paper by drawing conclusions about your topic and research question.

Citation: Sources need to be a combination of print (journal/magazine/newspaper/book), websites, or videos. **All sources need to be evaluated for credibility.** Cite all sources using APA Format. Follow proper in text citation and References page guidelines (again, we will review citation formats later in the semester.

Formatting: 8-10 pages; Typed double-spaced; default 1-inch margins; Times New Roman, font size 12.

Grading Rubric Research Paper

Criteria Scale	Thesis & Quality of Information	Organization & Transitions	Style, Grammar, Mechanics	Counter-Argument/ Rebuttal	APA-Style Citations/APA Format
A	• Clearly stated and appropriately focused—makes a strong argument. • Information clearly related to the main topic, included citations from each source in the reference page that advanced the argument. Six sources are scholarly and no more than two reliable internet sources.	• Clear organizational structure with a logical progression, linking ideas to support main points.	• Sophisticated, polished language throughout paper. Word choice fits the topic. Polished, varied vocabulary. • Demonstrates a solid grasp of grammar, punctuation, spelling, capitalization, paragraph indention.	• Clear, accurate counter-argument that addresses the other side and skillfully explains why the information is invalid, doesn't reach far enough, etc.	• All sources accurately documented in parenthetical references. All citations include varied signal tags. 6-10 sources on references page, formatted in APA with no errors. Title page, running head, page numbers, references page all APA.
B	• Clearly stated but focus needed to be sharper. Makes an argument. • Information clearly related to the main topic, provided citations from each source in the reference page. Information related to main ideas. Six sources are scholarly and no more than two reliable internet sources.	• Well organized structure with a progression of ideas, linking ideas from start to finish.	• Sophisticated language throughout paper, some lapse into awkwardness. Word choice fits the topic, though there may be some unnecessary repetition. • Demonstrates reasonable control over grammar, punctuation, spelling, capitalization, paragraph indention.	• Clear counter-argument. Addresses the other side, merely explains or addresses a weaker point of opposition.	• All sources accurately documented in parenthetical references, but a few were not in APA format. All citations include signal tags, though some may be awkward or repetitive. 6-10 sources on references page, formatted in APA with no errors. Title page, running head, page numbers, references page font all APA, though there may be minor lapses.
C	• Thesis stated but not appropriately focused. Argument weak. • Information clearly related to the main topic, citations from each source in the reference page. Information in citations loosely related to main ideas. Five sources are scholarly and no more than two internet sources, though they may not be as reliable.	• Organized with some progression of ideas, linking ideas and supporting points with some consistency.	• Clear language throughout paper, though often lapses into awkwardness. Word choice fits the topic, though includes many unnecessary repetition. • Demonstrates some control over grammar, punctuation, spelling, capitalization, paragraph indention.	• Counter-argument exists. May be undeveloped. (Weak rebuttal).	• All sources accurately documented in parenthetical references, but many were not in APA format. Citations include signal tags, many signal tags are awkward, repetitive, or inconsistently applied. 6-10 sources on references page, formatted in APA with noticeable errors. Title page, running head, page numbers, references page font all APA.
D	• Thesis is inferred but not stated. No argument implied. • Information related to the main topic. Included citations from at least 5 sources in the reference page, but not all. (OR) Information in citations unclear or loosely related to main ideas. Fewer than five scholarly sources. More than two internet sources.	• Disorganized and provides few, if any, relevant links between ideas and examples.	• Writing is awkward or simplistic. Word choice is unnecessarily repetitive. • Many errors distract the reader and make the text difficult to read.	• Counter-argument is unclear or does not include a clear rebuttal.	• Some sources are not accurately documented in text, glaring APA errors. Few signal tags. Fewer than 6 sources on references page, formatted in APA with noticeable errors. May be missing title page, running head, or page numbers.
F	• No thesis statement. • Information has little or nothing to do with main topic. Fewer than 5 sources from the references page used in the paper. No scholarly sources. All sources are internet sources.	• No organization or logic, irrelevant details and examples with little to no links between ideas and examples.	• Writing is unreadable. • Attempt to edit conventions/mechanics is not evident.	• No observable effort to present a counter argument or rebuttal.	• No parenthetical references observed. No signal tags. No observable effort in APA formatting. No references provided. • Plagiarism.

*Rubric is subject to change with notification.