

Essay 3: The Research Project

Purpose:

The third and final essay this semester, which must be **15-20 pages in length**, is a Research Project. A research-based essay is one that uses a critical approach to engage with a topic that most people engage with uncritically and supports that interpretation with ample primary/secondary research. The purpose of such an assignment is to provide further insight for a seldom discussed topic or to provide new perspectives on a familiar topic.

Assignment:

In an essay of **15-20 pages**, you will explore a social, political, or cultural phenomenon related to our course theme, “Navigating the World Through Food.” While your essay must relate to our course theme in some way, the specific subject is entirely up to you, as the best research projects are rooted in material you, the writer, have a certain level of interest in. In the process of writing this essay, you will 1) do **extensive primary and secondary research** about your topic; 2) develop a specific **research question** to help guide your **thesis statement**; 3) develop a clear, layered thesis statement that directly answers your research question; and 4) construct an organized essay that informs your readers about your basic premise, **incorporates others’ research** to show your reader what work has already been done in regards to your topic and how it supports/contradicts your position upon it, and **supports/advances your argument through detailed analysis**. The research question you develop will guide your research project as a whole, and your thesis statement will be the “answer” to this question. Your research question can draw from whatever inspires you, including social and cultural trends, social, political, or global issues, film and literature, digital media, etc. I encourage you to be creative here but, of course, do your research. **A FEW SAMPLE RESEARCH QUESTIONS:** 1) *Does one’s upbringing and or/socioeconomic standing affect their relationship to food and food culture? Thus, is “food culture” inherently classist?* 2) *In the age of social media, does the concept of “dining” even exist? How has social media and digital culture affected our relationship to food as means to create social bonds?* 3) *How important is “authenticity” when considering ethnic cuisine? Should diners be informed about the origin(s) of what they’re eating, and whether or not credit is being given?*

You will need to find and make use of **10-12 research sources** in this essay, including at least one book length source. Encyclopedia articles (i.e., Wikipedia), Google Answers, and other non-scholarly sources will not be allowed. You may incorporate internet sources, but **only 1 internet source will count towards your 10-12 sources**. It is important to emphasize that this is not simply a research report; instead, *you are constructing your own argument and drawing upon evidence from various sources to support it*. Your essay should follow MLA citation and reference list format, and any essay turned in without appropriate citations will not receive a grade.

Spotlight and Grading Criteria:

For this essay, you will be graded on a variety of criteria, but one thing that should take precedence for you is the **use of primary and secondary research**. Since this is a research paper, I expect you to take time doing

your research, and I will provide resources for you all to understand this process in the coming weeks. You will be expected to both **include appropriate sources *and* utilize them in a way that advances your argument.** Additionally, you will be graded on the following: *the strength of your research question and thesis, use of appropriate academic language including paraphrasing and citation formatting, organization, and clarity.*

Informal Research Proposal:

As a part of the research process, you must first submit an **informal research proposal**. This should be about a paragraph in length (250 words), **describing your “research question” and subsequent argument.** You will detail your chosen topic and the argument you hope to explore in your paper, as well as detail your initial research findings. You will also include your first 2 secondary sources/annotations for approval. If I think you need to rework your argument or look elsewhere for sources, I will let you know at this point. This part of the assignment is informal, but you will still need to submit a typed, coherent proposal to Canvas by the due date. Failure to do so will have an adverse effect on your grade, as well as your overall project.

Due Dates:

Informal Research Proposal: **4/22 by EOD (5% of grade)**

Rough Draft: **5/6 , Canvas Peer Review times TBA (10% of grade)**

Final Draft: **5/20 by EOD**

****make sure to consult Canvas assignment page for any changes to due date(s).****

Your final essay MUST be submitted on the final day of class (5/20) to receive credit. I will not accept any type of late submission for Essay 3 or the Annotated Bibliography.