

Mod 5 discussions all due 10/17 replies due 10/20

Disc 1

Overview

In the researched rebuttal argument essay, you will research a problem in society that directly affects you because of some element of your identity. Where can your voice make a difference in this world? Think about areas you are personally passionate about or a topic that allows you to learn about something important to you.

In this discussion you will brainstorm and create a topic proposal so that, with the collaboration of your peers and your instructor, you can be sure to develop a thorough understanding of the complexity of your topic.

You should spend approximately 2 hours on this assignment.

Instructions

1. For your **Module 5 Assignment: Researched Rebuttal Argument Essay**, you will write a rebuttal argument to a specific person or organization's position argument. Consider the following topic choice guidelines:
 - Choose an issue that affects you personally because of some element of your identity. You can explore topic ideas in the CCCOnline Library's **Points of View Reference Center** database if you need help brainstorming.
 - Find a person or organization who holds an opinion that you disagree with. You will construct your essay in opposition/rebuttal to their specific arguments.
2. **Think:** Brainstorm topic ideas that interest and affect you, and potentially affect your community and beyond. Then find a specific argument on that topic that you disagree with. Consider the specific points or arguments that person or organization makes on the topic.
3. **Write: Write a topic proposal for your essay. Include the following information:**
 - **What issue will you write about, and how does it affect you personally?**
 - **Whose position, specifically, will you refute (which person or organization)?**
 - **What is this person's position on your topic?**
 - **What is your position on the topic?**
 - **List five main arguments that the person or organization (your audience/opposition) has on this topic that you will argue against.**
 - **List 2-3 possible sources.**
4. Post one original post, and reply to at least two of your classmates. In your

replies to peers, help one another narrow your topic choices and focus on refuting a counterargument. Help one another decide if the opposition/audience choice is effective, and if the counterarguments listed are the strongest opposing arguments to consider. Play devil's advocate, and help one another consider the many perspectives on the topic.

5. Don't forget that your initial posting is due by the date listed in the Course Schedule. Please post over several days. Points will be lost if you post on only one day of the module.

See the Course Schedule and Course Rubrics sections in the Syllabus module for due dates and grading information. See the Grading and Evaluation section in the Syllabus module for general discussion expectations.

Disc1 Article

The practice of challenging or banning books has long been a strategy used to label reading materials as offensive on moral, religious, or political grounds. Books with sexually explicit content, or those that challenge religious or political orthodoxy, have throughout history, been regarded as a threat to public welfare. While the practice of banning books has declined in democratic societies, challenges to literature still occur today for the same reasons.

Understanding the Discussion

Ban: To prohibit, usually through legal or social authority.

First Amendment to the US Constitution: The First Amendment reads: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances."

Offensive: Causing feelings of insult or strong displeasure.

Suppress: To hold back or remove from circulation.

Totalitarianism: A form of government in which the state is overseen by a strict, central authority that allows little or no deviation from the laws and rules which it imposes.

An Overview

In totalitarian societies, books have been banned for challenging a government's ruling authority. Arguments for banning books claimed the need to promote political stability or maintain public morality. In more open societies, books that offend conventionality are often banned or challenged as well. If a book is deemed offensive, some may argue, that it is promoting ideas which can have a detrimental influence on individuals (often children) and on society as a whole. When public funds are used to buy the materials in question, the issue becomes further complicated.

Champions of intellectual freedom and free speech adamantly oppose challenges made by individuals, groups, or institutions who threaten to ban books.

Opponents of book banning argue that the threshold for causing offense differs between individuals and across cultures, and that one individual, group or institution should not dictate what constitutes offense to another. While adults are afforded discretion in deciding whether or not to read a particular book; many agree that parents have the right to limit the books to which their own children are exposed.

Banning books has a long history in the United States, where challenges have repeatedly come into conflict with the First Amendment to the US Constitution. Many, including librarians, see the banning of books as direct erosion of the First Amendment rights through censorship. Frequently such challenges and the ensuing debate have focused on the reading curriculum at public libraries and books available at school libraries.

History of Suppression of Controversial Ideas

Historically, illiteracy and the dearth of printed materials meant that books did not exert the influence they now have on society. As literacy rates increased and published materials became more easily accessible and affordable, totalitarian regimes resorted to the banning of books as a means of controlling people. History is replete with examples of prohibitions placed on literature. The works of Aristophanes, Ovid, and Confucius, and even portions of the Bible, were all at one point subjected to bans. Historically, materials deemed as subversive or offensive were simply burned to prohibit their access.

The content of some books or their interpretation was deemed offensive by religious institutions. For example, Western religious doctrine strongly objected to Biblical translations that might challenge the Church's authority or allow more personal interpretations of the text. In the sixteenth century, the Roman Catholic Church began keeping a list of prohibited books, known in Latin as the Index Librorum Prohibitorum. The aim of the list was to prevent people from reading books that would expose them to ideas that contradicted, misrepresented, or criticized the church's edicts or interpretations of the Bible. Two such examples include Edward Gibbon's *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776–1788), and Nikos Kazantzakis's *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1951). Objections to these texts centered, respectively, on the perceived deviation from church history and the unorthodox depiction of Christ. While, the Index was abolished in 1966, challenges to literature on religious grounds continued into the modern day. In 1988, Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* was banned in several Muslim countries because its depiction of the prophet Mohammed was so offensive to Muslims. In fact, Rushdie faced a fatwa, or call for him to be killed, by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who was the Supreme Leader of Iran at that time. On a more subtle level, The US version of *The Golden Compass*, by Philip Pullman, is different than the original version published in England. The American version edited out some sexual content and perceived anti-Christian content.

Throughout history, challenges and objections to literature have mostly fallen into three categories: political, moral, and religious. Political objections to literature

can be cited by numerous examples. In the USSR religious books were seen as contradictory to the atheist views of the country. In Nazi Germany, numerous books were banned and publicly burned (as many as 25,000 at one 1933 event): Jewish authors were targeted as were books considered decadent or subversive. However, it is not only within totalitarian regimes that books have been banned; books are routinely challenged in democratic societies as well. Challenges are made on political grounds; books that deny historical events such as the Holocaust or take an unpopular stance, such as speaking out against a war, have all been challenged in the past.

Moral Objections to Literature

Offense on moral grounds is often based on religious criteria. One common charge against banned books is that they are obscene. The US courts have historically had great difficulty in defining obscene material and as such the debate is heated one. Obscenity has been widely accepted as meaning that materials contain elements of sexuality, and foul or discriminatory language that can be seen as offensive. The most famous trials over banned books have been obscenity trials. James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) was banned in the US for its frank sexual content. The book was banned for a decade before a landmark legal decision acquitted it of obscenity charges. *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928) experienced a similar prohibition, also for its treatment of sexuality, and was banned from publication in the US until 1959 and in England until 1960.

How Did We Get Here- Fighting Book Banning

The movement against the banning of books also has a long history. One major landmark predating the twentieth century was the publication of John Milton's pamphlet *Areopagitica*, a Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing, to the Parliament of England (1644). The *Areopagitica* provided the framework for modern opposition to censorship. This order which Milton opposed was designed to bring publishing under government control by creating a number of official censors to whom authors would submit their work for approval-prior to having it published. Milton argued that pre-censorship of authors was little more than an excuse for state control of thought.

The core arguments against the banning of books have been based on protecting the rights of individuals to free speech as well as to promote intellectual freedom - the rights protected by the First Amendment. On issues concerning religion and morality, advocates for the First Amendment argue that it is indefensible to encourage censorship simply because people do not share similar beliefs. Opponents of censorship also state that it is virtually impossible, for the same reasons, to define concepts such as obscenity. Further, those who support free speech and free expression argue that there is great danger in an illiterate or ignorant populace which is easier to control through the exercise of power and demagoguery. Thus the unrestricted flow of information is viewed as a hallmark of a healthy democracy and makes it more difficult to exercise control and power over the uneducated and powerless.

Most attempts to ban books occur at the local level with challenges being made to public or school libraries. Attempts to ban books outright have not been overly successful in the latter half of the twentieth century; still there have been instances where particular books have been removed from libraries or prohibited from purchase based on complaints. While challenges have been made to books that discuss the topics of health, sexuality, and race and religion, challenges have also been made to works that are considered classics. Among the books most frequently challenged were Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884) and J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* has frequently made the annual list of banned books that is compiled by the American Library Association (ALA) and was on the 2008 list of challenged books. Controversial books are frequently targets for banning from school reading lists, with most complaints coming from parents. Many schools may choose to maintain a copy of the challenged book in their library, but stop short of making the book required reading.

Banning Books Today

Since 1982, Banned Books Week has been celebrated annually and promoted widely in public libraries by the American Library Association. The purpose of the event is to promote reading and knowledge while raising awareness about the frequent challenges to ban books from public and school libraries. Banned books week is celebrating its twenty-seventh anniversary in 2008.

Censorship in the form of banning books remains an all too common an occurrence in conservative cultures and countries where democratic traditions are weak. But challenges to books still occur in more liberal or democratic societies as well, and the controversy still evokes much debate. Depending upon which side of the argument one is on, views range from highly tolerant to highly charged. In the United States, challenges to books happen frequently; the 2008 list of challenged books numbers over 400.

Since 2000, the religious right and conservative groups have become increasingly vocal and have challenged books for recurrent reasons, mainly religious and moral, while arguing that the US culture has become too free. Recent challenges have focused on the Harry Potter series. In some instances, the books have been removed from school libraries, because some parents and groups felt that the books promote witchcraft.

The politically charged environment surrounding challenged and banned books has also inspired watchdog groups that monitor censorship to be more vigilant. These groups take on the task of defending books that are being challenged, as well as the rights of readers to decide for themselves which books they should read. Many advocates of free speech and intellectual freedom continue to rally around the idea that banning books is, in its violation of constitutional principles, anti-American.

In 2011, Twain scholar Alan Gribben published a new version of the novel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* that omitted 219 uses of racial epithets occurring

in the original text. Critics of the move stated it was a blatant example of censoring an original artwork. Gribben himself said he was approached by teachers about putting together a sanitized version of the classic book.

Disc 2

Overview

When you research, much of your credibility rests on the quality of the sources you choose to incorporate. Evaluating your sources is important in ensuring that you use only the most credible, accurate, and relevant sources to support your arguments, which in turn, ensures that your own arguments are credible and accurate. In this assignment, you will evaluate two sources you intend to use in your research.

This assignment should take approximately 2 hours.

Instructions

1. **Research:** Use the CCCOnline Library databases to locate at least two quality academic sources on your topic. You may use any of the databases you are interested in searching. If you aren't sure where to begin looking, some suggested databases are:
 - [Academic Search Complete](#)
 - [Global Issues in Context](#)
 - [Points of View Reference Center](#)
 - [TOPICsearch](#)
2. **Think:** Review the resource on the CRAAP Analysis method from the [Exploration](#) page. Consider the currency, relevance, authority, accuracy, and purpose of each of your sources. What does this evaluation tell you about using those sources in your own writing?
3. **Write:** Write a short evaluation paragraph for each source. Then, write an additional paragraph where you compare the two sources based on your evaluations of the sources.
4. Include a correctly formatted Works Cited entry for each source. Need help with MLA? Please refer to the [CCCOonline MLA Citation Toolkit](#), or consult the Purdue OWL for how to create a correctly formatted [MLA Works Cited page](#).
5. Post one original post, and reply to at least two of your classmates. In your replies to peers, compare your evaluations on your chosen sources. Discuss your findings and what elements you consider most important in a source. Discuss why it is important to pay attention to the credibility of your sources. Try to further the discussion in your replies by asking thoughtful questions, adding interesting information, or connecting your reply to the material we are discussing.
6. Don't forget that your initial posting is due by the date listed in the Course

Schedule. Please post over several days. Points will be lost if you post on only one day of the module.

See the Course Schedule and Course Rubrics sections in the Syllabus module for due dates and grading information. See the Grading and Evaluation section in the Syllabus module for general discussion expectations.

Disc 3

Overview

A researched argument has a lot of elements to organize and control, and a rebuttal argument is even more of a challenge. Use this peer review to give and receive feedback, analyzing your peers' and your own essays for the elements of an effective argument. Ensure the argument you contribute is the most credible and well-developed rebuttal argument you can make.

You should spend approximately 3 hours on this assignment.

Instructions

1. Post your completed draft of the Module 5 Assignment: Researched Rebuttal Argument Essay by the date listed on the schedule.
2. Save your document as a .doc or .pdf file, and attach it to your posting. Post your draft early; if you post your draft late, you may not get any comments at all. Include a short version of your title in the subject line of your post.
3. **Think:** Here are some questions to think about when doing your peer review:
 - Does the introduction directly address the opposition/audience and explain the significance of the topic?
 - Does the essay include a clear, specific, argumentative thesis statement?
 - Has the writer used a respectful and credible tone? Does the writer attempt to establish common ground with the opposition/audience?
 - Does the essay focus on refuting the specific claims of the opposition? Are the writer's rebuttal and argument reasons sound in logic, and do they specifically support the claim?
 - Does the essay develop specific evidence for the ideas?
 - Does the writer use source material to boost credibility? Do you see any places where the writer should use a source?
 - Does the essay include topic sentences and transitions to organize the body paragraphs?
 - Does the essay include correctly formatted in-text citations, using MLA Style, for each quotation and paraphrase?
 - Does the essay include a conclusion paragraph that synthesizes the main points and offers closure?
4. **Write: Complete a thorough peer review for at least two of your classmates. Post your review by replying to the writer's post in the forum. Choose an essay that has either not yet been reviewed or that has only one review so far. Offer as much feedback as possible:**

- **Address the "Think" questions above**
 - **Tell the author what he/she is doing right and what you want more of.**
 - **If something is not working for you, don't be afraid to point it out and tell the author why.**
 - **Give advice on how to make the changes you suggest.**
 - **Be specific!**
5. Post one original post (with your essay draft), and reply to at least two of your classmates. In your replies to peers, give your peers specific feedback on their essays as outlined above. Point out strengths. Ask questions and give pointers to help them improve further. Refer specifically to the resources provided in this module.
 6. Don't forget that your initial posting is due by the date listed in the Course Schedule. Please post over several days. Points will be lost if you post on only one day of the module.