

Research Project Overview

Over the final ten weeks of the term you will compose an original scholarly interpretation of a significant cultural topic. Topics may include such things as novels, films, plays, poems, music albums as well as artists, movements, styles and trends. You will identify a cultural topic of your choosing and research the existing body of scholarship on that topic and any relevant issues related to it. You will then devise an original thesis that helps your reader better understand the significance of your chosen topic and write an extensive research essay that proves your thesis.

Pick a topic that interests you and that you want to learn more about. Keep things fun; you will be discussing your project with the class so pick a topic everybody will enjoy learning and talking about. This is your opportunity to research something you enjoy and become an expert about it.

Sequence of Assignments

You will compose your research essay through a sequence of three graded assignments that are designed to introduce you to the practice of college-level research:

1. **Written Project Proposal.** Here you will write a formal proposal for your research essay in which you assess your current state of knowledge and discuss the questions that will guide your research. The class before the proposal is due, you will briefly discuss your topic and your research questions with your fellow students in our class.

2. **Annotated Bibliography.** Here you will summarize and evaluate scholarly sources you have found in the library and scholarly databases, as well as compose a preliminary thesis. The class after your bibliography is due, you will briefly discuss your research process and results with your fellow students in our class.

3. **Research Essay.** This is the final product of your research. You will write a well-organized essay in which you draw upon scholarly and other sources to argue in support of an original thesis about your topic.