ENGL2200
Guidelines & Instructions for Essay 3: Abstract and Annotated Bibliography

Length: 3-4 pages
Due Dates: Wednesday, 22 March: Draft 1 due for in-class peer review
           Wednesday, 29 March: Revised Draft 2 due

Failure to report to class with an acceptable draft (all components of the assignment completed) to exchange will result in your being marked absent for the class. You will still need to have your draft peer-edited. Failure to meet either of the above deadlines will result in grade deductions on the final assessment (a grade-level deduction for each DAY, not CLASS that the submission is late).

What: In this assignment, you will NOT write a complete essay but you will provide the results of your research in an annotated bibliography of at least six sources and an abstract of your findings. You will investigate the cultural impact of one of the following figure’s ideas on modern culture in the twentieth century:

1. Charles Darwin
2. Karl Marx
3. Friedrich Nietzsche
4. Sigmund Freud
5. Albert Einstein

You should attempt to discover how and why your selected figure challenged certainties and influenced the attitudes and values of the Modernist period. To answer this, you need to conduct research and identify six sources that help you gain insights into your selected figure, his ideas, and impact on culture.

These sources must be authored (no anonymous encyclopedia or web sources allowed): books (print or electronic), scholarly journals (no periodicals such as magazines or newspapers). If an online source, you must use sources available from Wentworth’s online databases. Seek the assistance of the reference librarians to direct you to the best sources. Your success in this assignment will be determined by your ability to find the best and more authoritative sources available. Do not settle for whatever is available. Find the most useful and most credible sources.

Why: This assignment develops your research skills to find and synthesize secondary sources to help you to answer the essay’s topic. Research skills are central to your work in the humanities at Wentworth and in other disciplines, and you need to be familiar with the print and online resources that are available. To produce an effective abstract and annotated bibliography, you will need to develop your skills in synthesizing data and reaching conclusions based on your synthesis. These skills will be invaluable for your future academic work.
How: To complete the assignment, first select one of the thinkers above to investigate. Here you might start with basic sources like encyclopedias just for the basics before moving on to authoritative, scholarly sources. I strongly advise you to consult with one of Wentworth’s reference librarians to help guide you to the best possible sources. You are, in effect, planning to write a research essay titled: The Impact of [Your figure]’s Ideas on Modernism. You want to find sources that will help you fully understand your figure’s ideas and how those ideas influenced modern culture. Sources might be book-length treatments of your subject, a chapter from a book on multiple figures, or book or journal articles (print or online from databases) that similarly treat your topic.

After finding your sources, you need to read them and extract the key ideas from each, especially the thesis and key evidence that proves the thesis. This information will be summarized in your annotated bibliography.

Writing an Annotated Bibliography
Your annotated bibliography should include the following:
1) Cite each source in correct MLA Works Cited format. You can use on-line citation creators, such as Easy-Bib or those included in Wentworth’s on-line databases, but check all against a guide, such as Rules for Writers.
2) Summarize succinctly and briefly each source, concentrating on its thesis, key claims and evidence.
3) Discuss how each source will aid in your “essays” development.

Sample MLA formatted Annotated Bibliography are posted on Blackboard in the Week 10 Assignment folder.

Writing the Abstract
An MLA-style abstract is a concise review of a finished research paper that summarizes the objective, subject-matter, methods, counter-arguments, and conclusions of the essay. It offers an explanation of what was done and what was discovered in a concise manner. Even though you will not write the full essay in this assignment, your abstract should summarize what you would have written: summarize your conclusions on the impact of your figure’s ideas on modern culture, supporting your assertions with the evidence from your six sources. Keep these points in mind:

- The abstract is a short description of the objective, methods, findings, and conclusions of your research: it should be a single paragraph, 150 – 200 words long.
- State why you decided to conduct the research on the subject and why it should matter to your reader.
- Give an account of what you found as a result of your research.
- Abstract should be double-spaced and properly MLA formatted. See sample.
Annotated Bibliography


This article, written by physicist Andy Berger, discusses how Einstein’s theories and discoveries impacted the way we understand the world, as well as the legacy of his thoughts. It does so in particular by explaining Einstein’s use of imagination and creative thinking to make his discoveries. The author describes the thought experiments the great scientist used and how he brought them to life, as well as Galileo’s influence on Einstein’s discoveries. In essence, the article focuses on the fact that all of Einstein’s discoveries came from his imagination—that, as the title emphasizes, it was all in his head.

This article, as a very recent source, is current and can be trusted as up to date. It is credible due to its use of quotes from reliable sources, including Einstein himself. Moreover, the author offers only facts in describing Einstein’s legacy and experiments. However, the author does not seem to cite these sources in text or out of text, which could perhaps raise suspicion. Nevertheless, the author’s overall knowledge and use of facts makes the work objective and credible.

As an article that describes the use of Einstein’s imagination and creative thinking in making his discoveries, this article is a very helpful resource for my research.

Modernism focused heavily on the issue of appearance versus reality, and this article
shows just how Einstein’s thought experiments offer a good example of the issue of appearance versus reality: are Einstein’s thoughts applicable to reality, or are they simply reality in his mind? Specifically, this article touched upon the famous thought experiment about the woman in the train and the man on the train platform that called into question time and, in doing so, reality itself. In essence, the author proves in the article that Einstein’s discoveries helped question reality. Furthermore, it gives me more information on what Einstein discovered and how his discoveries impacted the world we live in today.


This article, written by Professor Gary E. Bowman of Northern Arizona University, discusses Albert Einstein’s religious views and focuses on his attitude towards mysticism. It delves into the ins and outs of Einstein’s view towards mysticism, which was obscure and uncertain, ultimately concluding that Einstein was not a mystic. The author explains the large misunderstandings regarding Einstein’s view of mysticism and gives an overall explanation of Einstein’s religious beliefs, as well as a description of his attitudes on topics such as cosmic religious feeling, the world as concept, and intuition.

This source is credible, as it is written by an experienced, qualified professor. The author uses a plethora of outside sources and references, and consistently uses a quote or fact to back up his assertions. This article could potentially have some bias in it, but it is
unlikely due to the number of credible sources and facts the author uses; thus, it can be concluded that this source is objective and scholarly.

As a credible source that focuses on Einstein’s belief in mysticism, which relates strongly to the Modernist issue of reality versus appearance as well as uncertainty, this article is an immensely helpful resource. Although it does not explicitly mention his contributions to modernism or focus on his impact on the world, it helps give me an understanding of what Einstein thought of reality and what he believed to be mystical in this world. His beliefs in mysticism translated to his work which in turn changed the way people understood the world and reality, thus helping me see how Einstein influenced Modernist values. This source is very specific and doesn’t make many generalizations.


This article, written by the renowned physicist Chen-Ning Yang, describes in great detail the influence of Albert Einstein’s theories on physics. In particular, it discusses the three main discoveries in the early 20th century that changed the way people understood the universe—the special theory of relativity, the general theory of relativity, and quantum mechanics—and Einstein’s heavy influences on, if not direct discoveries of, them. The author explains Einstein’s contributions to symmetry principles as well as field theory and unification, and to physics as a whole.

This article is very credible as it is written objectively by an experienced and qualified professor who uses quotes, sources, facts, and mathematical explanations to
explain Einstein’s impact on physics. In fact, the author is quite renowned in the field of physics and won the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1957. There is no bias apparent in the article and the author uses only reliable sources. Although the source is relatively old (about thirty-six years), it is still current and presents facts that still hold true today.

As a credible, high-level, descriptive article, this article helps me a lot in my research. It highlights Einstein’s contributions to physics and, in doing so, shows how he truly changed the way people understand the universe, reflecting the key Modernist aspect of uncertainty. The author proves that Einstein challenged, through his work, the certainty of many different fundamental scientific beliefs, leaving behind uncertainty in what seemed to be impossible discoveries.


This article focuses on Einstein’s theory of general relativity, discussing its ins and outs and questioning its perfection. The authors claim that Einstein’s theory has not yet failed any test, and they describe its significance, including its impact on black hole theory and gravitational wave theory. Nevertheless, the authors claim, this theory makes many scientists uneasy and many are in pursuit of a better one.

This article is written by several experienced authors who are more than qualified to be writing on the subject of Einstein’s work. They use reliable outside sources and use them frequently to prove their claims, including quotes and accurate facts. This article is
certainly objective, and it seems to employ no relevant bias in its evaluation and description of Einstein’s theory of general relativity.

Focusing on the uncertainty of Einstein’s theory of general relativity, this article is definitely a helpful resource for my research. A key Modernist value was uncertainty and this article shows exactly how Einstein’s theory of general relativity reflects this value that is so important to Modernism, although it does not explicitly do so. The author’s analysis of the scientist’s theories is clear evidence however that Einstein’s work raised many questions. The article is quite specific and it is definitely scholarly, but not too much so.


As suggested by the title, this essay by Professor Brian Greene, a well-known theoretical physicist, presents Einstein’s work and its significance on both physics and the way the world is understood. The author summarizes Einstein’s career, describes his fame as the genius of geniuses, and explains the importance of his work today. In fact, the subtitle claims that “The fruits of one mind shaped civilization more than seems possible,” referring to Einstein.

As a recent source, this essay is definitely current and up to date. It is also credible due to its use of reliable sources, quotes, and concrete facts. Thus, it is objective and includes no apparent bias; there seems to include only accurate information in this essay. Furthermore, as previously mentioned, this article is written by an acclaimed
theoretical physicist, Brian Greene, who has appeared in movies, shows, and TED talks regarding physics.

This essay is general in its explanation of Einstein’s importance to the world, but it is also specific at times. Overall, it is helpful in my research because it helps give me an understanding of the significance of Einstein’s work as well as an overview of what exactly he did to transform the world. Although it does not explicitly offer any information on how Einstein influenced the attitudes and values of Modernism, it does show, through its explanation of his work and legacy, how he attacked the certainty of some ideas and shaped the way people think to this day. The author proves through an analysis of Einstein’s work that the infamous scientist’s ideas challenged the fundamental beliefs of the time and essentially shattered what had been held as long-standing truths, causing a clear change in how people understand reality.


This article, written by the acclaimed Walter Isaacson, discusses Einstein’s theory of general relativity and, as suggested by the title, how he was able to reinvent the conception of reality with this theory. The author explains gravity, waves, and general relativity as a whole, and he also discusses the history behind the discovery of this revolutionary theory. Ultimately, the author describes the impact Einstein’s theory had on an understanding of reality.
This article is definitely credible, as it is written by a very qualified author, Walter Isaacson, who is in fact quite famous as he is the CEO of the Aspen Institute and was previously the chairman of CNN. Isaacson uses many quotes from reliable sources, including Einstein himself, and there appears to be no relevant bias employed by the author. Thus, the work seems to be objective and scholarly. The source is quite specific, focusing on some minor details as well as major ones; sometimes it gives general statements, but it often focuses on the specificities of what is being discussed.

Overall this article is a very helpful resource as it discusses a major part of what I am attempting to research: the Modernist emphasis on the issue of reality. The author describes how Einstein completely revolutionized the way we understand the world and the way we understand reality itself through analysis of his work and key aspects of his life. In essence, the article shows how Einstein’s discoveries led to a whole new image of the universe, shattering preconceived notions on how the world works. Furthermore, branching from this is what seems to be an implicit explanation of the fact that Einstein’s work helps people see not exactly what we know, but rather how we know what we know, a key Modernist value. As previously mentioned, the author shows how Einstein changed the way we understand the world, and the emphasis here is on the word “understand.” The article shows how Einstein’s work goes beyond simply adding to the real of what people know; it gives us a clear understanding of how the word works, and in turn how we know what we know.

This article discusses Einstein’s enduring, iconic equation $E = mc^2$ and attempts to demonstrate its correctness. The authors analyze the equation and aim to disprove the idea that it is flawed. Ultimately, using mathematical derivation and experimenting, the authors conclude that the equation is wholly correct and flawless.

This source uses many different, credible sources and draws information only from those sources. The article does not include any apparent bias and is thus objective. It is written by qualified authors and seems credible.

This source is scholarly and it seems to be a bit too much so. Thus, it is a bit difficult for me to understand what is going on in the article. However, I can understand the general idea being conveyed by the source, and that is that Einstein’s work has endured and still reigns supreme today. In essence, this article shows Einstein’s lasting legacy on the world and how much he has impacted it through the endurance of his principal equation, and this is important for my research.
This essay will be graded as follows:

**Superior (A–B+).** Awarded to essays that meet the minimum criteria listed above but goes beyond by offering particularly thoughtful, original, and innovative observations or insights. A Superior response supports all claims with evidence and shows a superior understanding of the work and the relevant issues. The thesis of the essay should be more than just competent but original and surprising: offering the reader much more than the obvious. The essay needs to be in perfect MLA format with sufficient direct quotations (cited properly) to support assertions. A Superior essay will not contain more than two basic writing errors.

**Adequate (B–B-).** Shows a high level of thoroughness, correctness, and understanding, but lacks the overall presentation, quality, and effectiveness of the Superior work. Understanding of the source material and issues, and is able to analyze and synthesize the source, though in a more general, less nuanced way. There may be areas in the essay where the logical connections between ideas are not clearly shown and in which borrowed ideas are not properly credited and cited. There are some, but not many errors (4-5) of grammar, punctuation, and mechanics.

**Succeeds in Some Areas but Needs Improvement (C+–C-).** Shows an acceptable response to the minimum standards of the assignment with some mechanical errors and lack of enough support for assertions and logical connections among ideas. The author may not thoroughly understand the source well enough to restate key ideas adequately or effectively enough. Ideas need more development and sometimes are not attributed to the source and/or improperly cited with missing signal phrases. There are many errors (more than 2-3 per page) of grammar, punctuation, and mechanics.

**Seriously Deficient. (D–F).** Assignment marred by errors in syntax, mechanics, and grammar that seriously distract the reader. The author fails to demonstrate an adequate level of reading comprehension and, as a result, does not summarize logically or effectively. Use of the source is marred by failure to attribute ideas to the source, lack of proper signal phrases, and proper citations. Assertions lack sufficient support, and there is little coherence and unity within or between paragraphs. There is little evidence that the author revised or proofread the essay, and the author may have not understood or adhered to the instructions for the assignment. There are excessive errors (more than 3-4 per page) of grammar, punctuation, and mechanics.