Researched Argument Essay Assignment and Information – November 9, 2017
WIT English I, Sections 19 and 26 - Professor Buckley

Researched Argument (Persuasion) Essay: 30% of semester grade
(25% - essay 5% Presentation (yes it is only 5% but do well on it) 6-8 pages, including Works Cited page (Example – 6 pages text, 7th is Works Cited, so 7 pages total, or 7 pages text, 8th is Works Cited)

Due Dates:
Length: 6-7 pages, including 1 page of Works Cited - You must write at least 6 full pages of text, including direct quotations with parenthetical citations, and your last numbered page (page 7 or 8, depending on the length of your essay), is the Works Cited page. A minimum of 6 pages is quite minimal for a research essay, and with your own discussion and quotations, 6 pages comes fast. Typical content would be your intro, a broad overview of the subject, leading to the point you want to make; three-four points, with examples and development in support or your position, consideration of one or two arguments against; conclusion. You could aim for, but are not required to, use one direct quotation per paragraph. You can use a graph or a picture, if you need to. It should not take up a whole page, or if it does, be sure you meet the writing requirement of 6 pages. Also, do not use a visual aid merely to pad the paper. You have to refer to it in some way.

We will be researching and drafting in some of our class sessions.
You will also be expected to work on it outside of class. You must check in with me on your progress during class sessions. The more drafting, revising, and polishing, the better you will do.

Format: MLA format, parenthetical citations, direct quotations, Works Cited; typed double-space, Times New Roman 12, proper margins all around – 1” – writing to the margin!

Sources for Help:
Materials in Back to the Lake – MLA format, citations, sample paper, and information on rhetorical strategies.
  1. Lecture(s) in class on finding sources and evaluating and quoting and citing
  2. Class time for answering questions, brainstorming, drafting
  3. Librarians – ask them for help. They love to help.

Topics: NOT open for topics are: democrats vs. republicans; abortion; anything to do with the pledge of allegiance or the flag; school prayer; illegal immigration; gay marriage; anything to do with sports; sports salaries; changes in sports rules; healthcare laws-Affordable health care act; validity of climate change; euthanasia or physician assisted suicide; school uniforms; Israeli-Palestinian conflict; other world conflicts; Isis; religion; churches paying taxes; drinking age, video games, cars, motorcycles, death penalty, gun control, voter ids, no topics you did in high school, and no regurgitating a paper from another class. Other topics may be dismissed for lack of viability.

The paper MUST be an Argument – NOT a Report!

You must clear your topic with me.
Topic possibilities include, but are not restricted to:
See CQ Researcher, online through our library
Energy:
Wind turbines – placement, environmental impact, aesthetic
Solar arrays - placement, environmental impact, aesthetic
Fracking
Arctic National Wildlife Refuge drilling (or other potentially fragile area drilling)
Controversial pipelines
Science: Genetically Modified Foods - Should they be banned? Are all GMOs bad?
Threats to bio-diversity – invasive species
Architecture/Housing: New and Old – considerations for the landscape; public planning, buildings that don't fit in with the neighborhood or historical atmosphere, or building expensive housing, gentrification, etc,
Higher Ed - Student Loan Forgiveness or even free tuition
Society/Economy:
Should millionaires and billionaires be taxed at a higher level?
Should the minimum wage be raised?
Should Edward Snowden be pardoned?
Should the Electoral College system be abolished?
Regulating/Taxing the Sharing Economy (Air BNB, Uber vs. local taxis, etc.)
Capping development of charter schools
Should police wear body cameras?
Standardized tests, like MCAS Do we need them?
Common Core – for or against and why
Is Amazon growing too powerful?
Does Voting for a Third-Party Candidate Mean Throwing Away Your Vote?
What Is More Important: Our Privacy or National Security?
Should single use plastic shopping bags be banned? Other plastics, Styrofoam, etc.? Straws!
Should Massachusetts switch to the Atlantic time zone?
Should we do away with setting clocks forward and back?
Do bystanders have the responsibility to intervene when there is trouble?
Should there be zoos?
Should the school day start later?
Should American students go to school more than 180 days a year?
Are self-driving vehicles the wave of the future?
Etc.
Whatever you choose for a topic, check with me. We will be working on choosing topics in class and brainstorming ideas, so you will have help to get your ideas on paper.
Your topic must be viable: this means that proper, adequate research is available and you can argue a side with very little emotion. Topics are not restricted to one student – in other words, several students might do the same topic.
Sources required: Minimum of 4 total, from these types. I recommend 6-8 resources.
1. Minimum of 2 scholarly articles – peer-reviewed - found online
3. Possibility one high quality website - from educational institution or foundation "think tank" - not a fanatical, off the beam, someone sitting in his garage taking over the world type - **Helpful websites:** CQ Researcher; Pro Con.org; NPR, Pew research, Politifact.org, Slate, etc.

4. Possibility of an actual book! Our library has many good, contemporary ones. We have full e-books, too.

5. Note that these are minimum requirements. You should likely go a bit beyond minimum.

6. Do not Google blindly! Start with CQ and Academic Search Complete.

**Why am I making you write a researched argument essay?**
Arguments are a part of everyday life and a major component of your college work. In fact, I believe you can become a better citizen if you know how to disassemble arguments and create your own, as you will be able to make choices for yourself and question those made by people around you – or even in power. I also believe that if you cannot argue your point with rational, clear thought and facts from reliable resources, you are a detriment to your cause; you must not only believe in something and support it; you must also know **why.**

You must write a well-developed, cohesive paper that states a point and supports it. Additionally, you must support your point with scholarly research, because knowing how to research an idea before arguing it is extremely important.

You are arguing a position. You are taking a stand. Whatever your topic, you must focus on a **debatable** point—something someone could, theoretically, at least, disagree with. However, you must pick something that can be supported with evidence. **Additionally, you must avoid fallacies.** Fallacies in your argument not only weaken your ethos on the position, as they show you do not have a grasp of logic, but they do not provide a valid argument and thus will not satisfy this assignment.

Remember to place your thesis statement at the end of the introduction in which you clearly articulate your topic and your stance regarding your topic, so that your argument is explicitly clear from the beginning. You will also need to include a counterargument in which you recognize and address the major opposition to your viewpoint.

Papers shorter than the six-page absolute minimum will be severely penalized or summarily failed, depending on how short the essay is. There will be no second chances on this one. We have plenty of time in class to work together on this essay. Use the class time allotted for that. Do NOT use the class time for other things.

*(Thanks to Bruce Swanlund for some of the ideas in this last section.)*

**Class Schedule for Preparation of Argument Essays**

Make use of helpful librarians, and also make an appointment (NOW) at the Writing Center in Beatty. They can help you at any stage of the process.

**Week 10**
**Tuesday, 11/7**
Class: Lecture/Discussion/Writing
Preparing for the Research Essay – We will be working with the essays in chapter 14, Argument, and doing many other activities to help you produce a fabulous research essay.

**HW:** Essays in Chapter 14. Revise Comparison Contrast Essay – due Thursday
Thursday, 11/9 – collect comparison contrast revisions
Class: Going over comma splices and who, whom.
Going over Chapter 14 more in depth.
Go over research handout.
HW: decide on topic for your essay
Read pages 667-672 and be prepared to discuss the essay

**Week 11**
**Tuesday, 11/14**
Class: Discuss essay we read.
Discuss topics.
Discuss sample papers that I emailed to you.
Dangling modifiers – grammar
Writing, researching.
**HW:** Researching

Thursday, 11/16
Class: Going over research materials thus far
Grammar
Writing research essay
**HW:** continuing work on research

**Week 12**
**Tuesday, 11/21**
Class: Viewing some writing, materials, outlines, whatever – should be beginning to have some paragraphs, introduction, perhaps – can do peer review.
Preparing for Argument Paper Presentations.
**HW:** working on research essay

Thursday, 11/23 – THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS
**HW:** working on research essay
Submit a draft by November 28th in class. Printed out. It should be done. 6 pages, and Works Cited.

**Week 13**
**Tuesday, 11/28**
Class: Drafts Done – peer review and quick look from Professor Buckley – whole class time devoted to this. You are either peer reviewing, talking to me, or revising.
**HW:** Finish it up and prepare for Argument Presentations.

Thursday, 11/30 – Argument Presentations
½ the class presenting papers

**Week 14**
**Tuesday, 12/5 – Last Class – Argument Presentations – other half the class presenting papers**
Final, PolishedArgument Essay Due, Printed out, handed in at the beginning.
No Final Exam

Cultural Enrichment Opportunity/extra credit:
Simmons College Concert Choir - Concert, Saturday, December 2. Stay tuned for details.
7:30pm, Simmons College, Alumnae Hall (Residence Campus) Free – great music and refreshments