

## Essay 4: Final Essay: Critical Response

A research-based essay that describes the debate surrounding a current and debatable issue.

### *The basics*

- **Due Date 1:** Draft 1 for peer review (Check calendar for date of draft workshop)
- **Due Date 2:** Draft 2 for peer view (Check calendar for date of draft workshop)
- **Due Date 3:** Revised draft, to be graded (Check calendar for date)
- **Length:** 1,500 to 2,100 words (not including Works Cited page)
- **Research:** At least 5 credible, recent sources found through the USC Upstate Library
- **Format:** Use MLA Style for parenthetical citations and for Works Cited page
- **Value:** 25% of your final grade (includes successful completion of all of the steps)

### *Description*

Your final and most important writing assignment in this class requires you to describe a current and debatable issue or topic and at least three competing viewpoints regarding it, then support the position you find most reasonable. You will first choose a somewhat general topic, then a specific debatable issue that interests you and that you will research carefully. Your goal is to be able to describe fairly and reasonably at least three positions on that issue and their justification.

### *Multi-stage process*

You will complete the following steps for this assignment. Failing to complete any of these steps will have a negative affect on your grade:

- Submitting at least 3 topic ideas
- Writing a topic proposal on one approved (by me) topic
- Meeting in a one-on-one conference with me
- Writing and peer reviewing an annotated bibliography
- Participating in draft workshops
- Revising your essay in response to draft workshop feedback

The final paper in English 101 will allow you to demonstrate all that you'll learn in this course this semester, including the following:

- Using a multi-stage approach to writing: brainstorming, drafting, revising, and editing;
- Critical reading: understanding texts but also being attuned to how the author shapes his or her ideas;
- Successfully quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing texts as appropriate;
- Locating and assessing relevant, credible sources;
- Generating and supporting your own ideas regarding a topic while also incorporating source material found through research.
- Using current MLA format appropriately.

# Selecting a Topic for the Final Essay in English 101

## *Finding a Topic Worth Doing*

### What not to do

- Do *not* pick a topic just because you already know what you think about it.
- Do *not* pick a topic because you wrote an essay about it in high school.
- Do *not* pick a topic because you think it will be easy to write about; the “easiest” topics are actually those that you genuinely want to know more about and will enjoy researching and studying for a few weeks.
- You should avoid picking a topic that is no longer currently in the news but that is an example of a stereotypical “research paper topic”; and do not pick a topic that is so broad that you’re unlikely find much new information about it:
  - Examples of these kinds of topics include (but are not limited to) gun control, abortion, legalizing drugs, changing the drinking age, teaching evolution in schools, global warming, and same-sex marriage.

### What to do

- Focus on finding a topic related to this year’s Preface reading
- Consider the things that you are most interested in and about which you would like to become an expert;
- Consider topics that are related to your major (if you have already declared one);
- Consider topics that are related to what you want to do for a living;
- Consider topics related to your hobbies.

### *These topics are a bad idea*

Abortion	Fracking	School uniforms
Abstinence programs	Fraternities / Sororities	Speed limit
Animal rights / animal testing	Evolution	Stem cell research
Arctic and Antarctic ice loss	Gun control	Steroids / P.E.D.s in sports
Athletes on strike	Immigration laws in the U.S.	Tort reform / Medical malpractice
Birth control	Legalizing marijuana / other drugs	Vaccinating children
Bullying	No Child Left Behind act	Voter fraud
Climate change / Global warming	Obesity	Voter ID laws
Concussions in sports	Organic foods	Voting age
Drinking age	Paying college athletes	War on drugs
Driving age	Pornography	War in Iraq
Eating disorders	Same-sex marriage	War in Afghanistan
Euthanasia (Mercy killing)	Sex education	

## 3 topic ideas for Essay 4

Essay 4 is a research-based essay describing the debate surrounding a current issue. Your job for this exercise is to find 3 current, debatable topics you'd want to write about for Essay 4 and submit a description of those to Blackboard

- **Deadline for Blackboard submission:** Friday, October 27 at 11:59pm
- **Length:** Between 150 and 200 words.
- **Format:** MLA format

## Topic proposal for Essay 4

(Before writing your proposal, be sure to review the requirements for the final essay.)

You will submit this proposal via Blackboard

- **Deadline for Blackboard submission:** Check calendar
- **Length:** roughly 300 words
- **Format:** Standard MLA formatting rules apply

### **Description**

The *Final Essay Topic Proposal* is designed to get you thinking about your final essay for this course and to help you make sure you're on the right track.

Your proposal should explain several things in one or two paragraphs, so it's important for you to be informative and concise at the same time:

- What topic do you propose to research and write about?
- How is the topic current? Can you provide an example of the topic being currently discussed in a media outlet? (If the answers to this second question is no, then the topic is not appropriate for this assignment.)
- Are there at least three different opinions about the topic? (If the answer is no, then the topic is not appropriate for this assignment.) Describe, very briefly, what those different opinions are.
- Why are you interested in the topic?
- Do you already have an opinion about the topic? What is it?
- What questions do you have about the topic that your research will allow you to answer?
- What sources have you found in your preliminary research? (Be sure that you have found recent, credible sources through the library resources that you've been learning how to use.)

**Please note:** once your topic proposal has been approved, *you may not change the topic of your paper* without writing a new topic proposal and getting it approved. It's usually best if you stick to the original topic you're settled on because you don't have a great deal of time to try out several different topics.

Student author's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Student editor's name: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Draft Workshop: *Essay Four: Critical Response*

### Goals

- Your goal is to review at least 2 different essays by other students and to have your own essay reviewed by at least 2 different students.
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### MLA Format

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Upper left-hand corner of first page ( <i>only!</i> ), student name, my name, name of the course, date of the draft. | <input type="checkbox"/> 1-inch margins                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Header of each page, in the upper righthand corner, include student's last name and the page number.                 | <input type="checkbox"/> The font Times New Roman          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Works Cited on the last page, correctly formatted.   | <input type="checkbox"/> 12-point type                     |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Double spaced text                |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> No extra space between paragraphs |
- 

### MLA Documentation: Incorporating sources

- Correctly formatted Works Cite page
- Parenthetical citations formatted correctly
- Direct quotations formatted correctly

Comments, MLA Format / Documentation:

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### Research

- The paper cites at least 5 credible, recent sources found through the USC Upstate Library
- There are at least 3 competing viewpoints represented.
- It is clear who, specifically, holds those different viewpoints.
- The details of those viewpoints are adequately explained.

Comments

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### Use of sources

- Are the signal phrases well written?
- Does the author make use of the "quote sandwich" model appropriately?

Comments

## **Organization**

### **Beginning**

- Opening paragraph captures the reader's attention and provides a sense of what the essay is about.
- Opening paragraph contains clear thesis statement.

### *Comments*

### **Unity: Paragraphs**

- Each paragraph has a clear, easy-to-identify topic sentence.
- Each paragraph makes a specific point (contained in the topic sentence)
- Each paragraph is logically connected to and develops support for the main idea of the essay

### *Comments*

### **Coherence**

- The order in which the paragraphs are arranged is appropriate
- The paragraphs are logically connected to each other
- The reader is carried from one paragraph to the next by transitional words or phrases

### *Comments*

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## **Overall comments**

Firstname Lastname

English 101

Dr. Williams

27 October 2016

I am proposing three topics: teen abuse prescription medicine, health care prices increasing and access, and organ donation. Within these three topics I will narrow it down and elaborate more on one topic.

Teen abuse prescription medicine, I think that this topic is not only serious, true and very current no matter what era we are in. Some opinions are that people may not think it is a problem when someone one else uses prescription medicine if they are having the same symptoms as the person who is taking the medicine, it is a huge violation in NCAA, destroys families and the damage it does to the drug user. This topic interests me in many ways one main reason is that my aunt recently died due to an overdose with prescription medicine. Also, I think it is a problem that is getting worse I would like to see what are factors that teens are turning to prescription medicine over street drugs. My opinion on this topic is that parents should monitor their child's medicine intake, that it is very dangerous and that the outcomes may not always be good. What causes someone to abuse their prescription, do doctors warn teens about the risks of getting abused if they abuse their medication?

Another topic I am considering is health care prices increasing and access, this topic is current. This is being discussed in the presidential debate. It will make it harder for people to purchase healthcare for their families, it will be harder to access, more people will possibly be paying out of pocket for medical visits. I am interested in this topic because it is concerning for the middle class. Some middle-class families already struggle with accessing and paying for

healthcare and if prices are increased and the accessibility is harder more people will not get the care they need. My opinion on this topic is that it should not be harder to access and the price should stay the same. Some of my questions regarding this topic are what is this going to do for economy, what is the positive outcome with this plan and who will benefit best from this plan?

Lastly, organ donation is my last topic that I am considering. I think this topic is current in the sense that people are always donating organs and when you go to get your driver's license they ask you if you want to be an organ donor. Many people will benefit with organ donations; some people do not think it is ethical to donate their organs and, some people may not be comfortable with donating their organs to others. I am interested in this topic because it's interesting how so many people benefit from organ donations. I think that everyone should be an organ donor unless you know you are not able to. Why do some people choose not to donate their organs?

In conclusion, these topics are current and debatable. Whichever topic I pick I know I will learn something from and become more knowledgeable in the end.

Firstname Lastname

Dr. Williams

English 101

28 October 2016

### Topic Proposal

The three topics I have chosen for my critical response paper are the acquisitions of higher education, economic tax distribution, and equal job or economic opportunities for minorities in the American economy. Higher education in America is a current topic which discusses the issues of an American college education, such as its steadily increasing tuition rates and specific advantages it brings towards discriminated or disadvantaged minorities. Tax distribution is the discussion of how certain government taxes should be split and paid for between the different economic classes such as the middle class and the “1%” class. Another topic currently being discussed is equal job opportunities for minorities and how minorities such as African Americans and Hispanic Americans can become more economically empowered in America. There are many viewpoints towards the acquisition of higher educations, there have been many suggestions such as lowering college tuition costs, increase in minority scholarship opportunities, and even promotion of free college education. The different viewpoints of equal tax distribution in America include increased tax percentages for the upper class and also increasing minimum wage for workers. Some of the different viewpoints towards equal economic opportunities for minorities include the excessive promotion of voting in predominant minority communities and promotion of minority run businesses in central communities.



The reason I feel these are good topics for the critical response essay is because all of these topics are current problems in American and will take a certain amount of time before an adequate solution is applied to them. I also feel that these are good topics because there have been multiple solutions that have been hypothesized about how these problems can be solved, rather than there being a direct “right” and “wrong” or “yes” and “no” answer.

Firstname Lastname

Dr Williams

English 101

29 October 2016

### Essay Four Topic Proposal

My first proposal is, "Should we use Human Gene Therapy?" As of October 19, 2016, Genengnews.com published an article saying, "Bacterial Ion Channel genes might help heart disorders." One view point is that it will Improve human health, stated by Jeff Wheelwright's books include *The Irritable Heart: Gulf War Syndrome and the Limits of Modern Medicine*. Another viewpoint is that if we tamper with our genes, we might lose our humanity, says one mother. The third viewpoint is that it might only benefit the wealthy, said Mohamed Larbi Bouguerra, a former director of the National Institute for Scientific and Technical Research in Tunisia. I've always found biology very interesting all the way through high school. I am always trying to see how things work. This means I really enjoy reading about genes because they are what makes us up. I do not have an opinion on the topic yet; every view point I have read I partially agree and disagree with it. I am curious how much scientist can actually change about an individual without causing harm. I have used the USC Upstate database: *Opposing Viewpoints in Context*.

My second proposal is, "When space colonization becomes available, should we partake in it?" According to CNET, on October 23, 2016, they are testing a giant full tank for mars colonization. One view point is that it is impractical, says Peter N. Spotts a staff writer at the Christian Science Monitor. Another view point is, according to Steven Hawkings, that Humans will not survive another 1000 years on earth, so we much look elsewhere. The third

viewpoint is that any child born in space would be sterile due to radiation, said The Week, an online newspaper. My generation was raised on video games about space and other futuristic things, so it has always been an influence on me. I think we should look elsewhere to live because we are slowly killing our planet. I want to know when are we likely to start colonizing. I found one article from an upstate database and the rest on google news.

My third proposal is about our minimum wage problem. This is very current considering it's a point our presidential candidates argue about. Many low-level entry job employees think it should be raised to \$15 an hour. Richard A. Epstein a Peter and Kirsten Bedford Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution, thinks that how we have our wage inequalities is a good thing. Another famous view point is what Donald Trump says about it; he says the minimum wage needs to go up, but it should be left up to the state's decision. I am interested in the topic because it affects me on a daily basis. I get \$7.25 an hour so if it was raised, I would get more money. One important question I want to find out is how will raising the minimum wage affect the economy. I got two sources from an USC Upstate database, and one from an article summarizing a trump interview.