

ENGL 1023—Researched Argument Assignment

Required Length: 1,750-2,500 words (6-8 pages), not including heading and Works Cited.

Writing fewer than 1,750 words will result in significant point deductions and will likely result in an F on the paper.

Citation of Source(s): You must cite all sources you use, both in-text and on a Works Cited page. Failure to cite all sources in both places will result in significant point deductions and likely an F on the paper.

Required Number of Sources: You must substantially use at least 5 credible sources:

- At least 1 of these sources must be one of the texts assigned for class this semester or one you wrote about in a prior paper for this course. If you feel you must begin with a brand new topic, you must e-mail me for approval at the beginning of the research process, prior to completing your annotated bibliography, and your paper must include at least one argument published in a reputable national newspaper or magazine no earlier than 2017.
- At least 3 of these sources must NOT have been assigned during the semester—in other words, you must locate at least 3 sources on your own.
- At least 2 sources must be written (i.e., not film, multimedia, etc.).
- **At least 4 of the sources in your annotated bibliography must be used substantially in your essay.** By “substantially,” I mean they must contribute something important, not just a single quote that’s been forced into your paper for the sake of meeting a requirement. This means that you should do more research than what you present in your annotated bibliography, and select only the most important sources to include in your annotated bibliography.
- **Keep in mind that 5 is an absolute minimum number of sources; it in no way guarantees an adequately researched essay.**

Assignment:

Write an evidence-based argument in response to one of the following prompts. These prompts give you a range of ideas that you should, as you research, narrow to a very specific *analytical* or *argumentative* question—in other words, a research question that is *not* entirely fact (information)-based, but one that reasonable people may answer differently. You should rely on strong research to come to a reasoned conclusion—an answer to your question that the majority of credible evidence supports. This reasoned conclusion should ultimately be your thesis, which you will support using the evidence you’ve found through your research. However, you should structure your final argument in the way that will best appeal to your intended audience. Obviously, this means you will need to have a good understanding of who that audience is, and a good, clear purpose for addressing that audience.

Prompts:

- Do some original research on similar monster films over time. What do the changes in the representation of the monster reveal about changes in our cultural anxieties (specifically, in one particular cultural anxiety)? While you should draw on the theories of the writers

we've read this semester, you should also add to the conversation by proposing a new theory of your own—that is, an explanation of what a particular monster is revealing about our anxiety *today* that other writers have not proposed. Example essays of this kind in the *Monsters* reader: “Werewolves in Psyche in Cinema,” “Sexuality and the Vampire,” “(Un)safe Sex: Romancing the Vampire”

- Analyze a single recent monster television series you consider important. What does it seem to argue or reveal about contemporary society?
- Build on or refute Deborah Tannen’s ideas using original research of your own (investigation/analysis of newspapers and televised news and/or talk shows)
- Engage in a current controversy, building on at least one of the arguments or texts you’ve read for class this semester and responding to a strong, credible written argument published in a reputable national newspaper or magazine no earlier than 2017. For example, you might use Genoways’ essay “Here Be Monsters” as a springboard to research post-9/11 security; other topics arising from our course readings include recent controversies surrounding nuclear weapons, an issue relating to wildlife (e.g., wolf) conservation, a controversial question relating to technology (for example, relating to sociable robots, robots as caregivers, the effect of social media or cell phones on empathy, etc.), the use of torture, etc.
- Another question I proposed for thought early on, and that McCormick’s essay and Brothers’ essay both touch on is: With film’s potential to use stunning visuals and special effects to depict graphic, gruesome scenes, has it become spectacle instead of story? And what is the ultimate *effect* of this on the audience?
- Research a historical question relating to monsters, such as the role fear of women played in the Salem witch trials, or the reasons and the ways in which Native Americans were demonized during the period of Colonization. Note: you would have to write a book to adequately cover one of these topics, so you would need to do your initial background research and then narrow your focus to a very specific fear or reason for demonization. One example might be narrowing the focus of a paper on the Salem witch trials to one interesting cause, such as competition between male clergy and female midwives.

Important Guidance for Focusing Your Paper:

Your aim should be to add something *new* to the conversation that already exists on your topic. You should *not* simply present a summary of what others have said on the topic; for example, to argue that vampires are an expression of sexual anxiety, and then present what various writers have said on this anxiety in vampire stories, would amount to no more than a report, and would not be an original argument. You need to find a *new* angle, some new contribution you can add based on your own observations and thinking. What have these other writers failed to notice? Or how can you apply what they’ve said to something entirely new, or apply it in a brand new way?

If you are arguing about a controversial issue, you should investigate the arguments others have made on that issue, and try to figure out why the issue has not yet been resolved. What argument can you make that has *not* been made yet that may ultimately help move the various viewpoints

toward agreement—toward a solution everyone can live with? Use your research to not only determine what solutions or positions the evidence best supports, but also how you can appeal to the various sides to persuade them to adopt a solution that is in most people’s best interest. A good example would be the controversy surrounding immigration: to argue something about immigration, you would need to research what other people have argued—the various positions people take on the issue and *why* they take those positions (what values and evidence inform their positions), and you would also need to research the evidence about immigration itself; if people want to tighten immigration laws for the sake of lowering crime, you need to research the impact of immigration on crime. Then you need to determine the most reasonable position to take on immigration with respect to crime and argue to opposing views in such a way that they will be persuaded that your position is not only backed by the majority of credible evidence but is also consistent with their concerns and values (such as safety).

Organization:

Because you are *not* simply presenting a research report, but your own unique point of view developed through your investigation, your thesis should be arguable (not a fact), and each of your main points should be arguable—in other words, your thesis and main points should be *claims* rather than facts. You should then use facts and other evidence (such as the results of research studies, expert opinion, and your own analysis of primary sources) to support these claims. You should *not* begin a body paragraph with a quote or other fact, unless you are devoting the *entire* paragraph to summarizing a research source (such as a film, which you will then analyze, or a research study).

However, beyond this basic principle of good essay structure, you will need to decide the best organization for the particular argument you’re making. Use what you’ve learned this semester to determine where your thesis should appear, based on an analysis of your audience and purpose. You should also base your structure, as well as the selection of your main points (claims) and supporting evidence, on the *type* of argument that you will ultimately make: a classical Toulmin argument (good for arguing a position on a controversial issue), a rebuttal argument, a fact-based argument or analysis (which would follow a straightforward structure of thesis + main points), a definition argument, a cause-effect argument, etc.

Your argument should be multi-sided, though how much attention you give to opposing views will depend on how controversial the issue is. It is up to you to assess your audience and purpose and then make an informed judgment about the objections you need to acknowledge and concede to or refute. Even analyses should incorporate other views—specifically, the views of other authors who have proposed analyses of your film, television show, etc., that you disagree with or that you wish to *add to*, because they did not go far enough, or ideas of writers that you use as an analytical framework for your exploration of your subject.

Please note that a 5-paragraph essay will *not* be adequate for this assignment; you will have more material to break down and develop than 5 paragraphs can possibly allow.

Style & Tone:

You will need to determine based on an analysis of your audience and purpose the most effective style and tone to take. Remember that you *should* be trying to convince your audience of something (specifically, your thesis), so your audience *should* be assumed to be either neutral or hostile. You are *not* writing one-sided propaganda to rally the troops. You should also assume *at least* a mature audience—that is, an audience who is at least intelligent and mature (not adolescents, who may not understand all your research or be interested in the in-depth argument you will present). Therefore, to be taken seriously, you should avoid slang and exclamations.

Beyond that, you should think very carefully about your **appeals to pathos and ethos**. Because this is an evidence-based argument, it should rely heavily on **logical appeals**; but because you may be also trying to sway a hostile audience, you should determine to what extent emotional appeals will help (or hurt) your argument, and where it will be most effective to appeal to emotion, if at all (many arguments save emotional appeals for the conclusion, once the audience has been persuaded by evidence). Remember that appeals to pathos also include appeals to the values of the audience, which may be important in persuading them to take a particular position.

Your appeal to ethos will most likely take the form of showing you've done good research and chosen credible sources, as well as showing you're sympathetic to and knowledgeable about opposing views. You will also earn credibility by adopting the most appropriate tone for your audience and purpose and by taking care with your language and citation of sources.

Citation of Sources:

Remember that all sources you summarize, paraphrase, or quote must be cited in two places in your paper: in-text (in the body of the essay) and on the Works Cited page:

- **In-text citation:** Remember that when quoting, paraphrasing, or summarizing passages from a printed text that has printed page numbers, you must cite the page numbers for everything you quote **and** paraphrase or summarize. These printed texts include the essays in your reader (if you read them in your reader) as well as PDFs downloaded from the academic databases (so if you downloaded one of the essays in the reader from the academic database in PDF form, which preserved its original printed formatting, it will likely include printed page numbers, which you must cite). Articles published on a web site will not have printed page numbers, even if your printer put page numbers on them; for these articles, it is good practice to cite paragraph numbers, unless there are so many paragraphs as to make this impractical.
- **When analyzing film or multimedia, your in-text citation should match the first piece of information in your Works Cited entry**, just as it should when analyzing a written text. **(The same applies to visuals—look up how to create a Works Cited entry for a piece of art or the particular type of visual source, and then in-text, cite the *first* piece of information in the Works Cited entry for the source.)** Remember

that a Works Cited entry for a film can begin with the director(s) or the title of the film, depending on what your paper is emphasizing. I recommend using the format that begins the Works Cited entry with the title of the film. That way, you can introduce the title of the film in your introduction, and then as you analyze it, your audience will understand you are using examples from that film, and you won't need to cite the director's name in parentheses. There are obviously no page citations for films and other multimedia sources, but it is good practice to cite the time being referred to in a video (in minutes and seconds), for example: (2:30).

- **Your final page should be a Works Cited page** with all your sources cited properly in MLA format. Source entries should be alphabetized by the first piece of information in each entry—usually the last name of the author, but if the work has no named author, then by the first main word in the title or whatever piece of information comes first. Remember that all entries should be double-spaced and use hanging indents. Use the paper formatting template posted on Canvas to help you! It contains formatting instructions and is also formatted as a paper should be, with a correctly formatted Works Cited page.

Submission Requirements/Minimum Requirements for a Passing Grade:

- **At least 1,750 words, not including Works Cited**, with a clear introduction, body, conclusion. The body must be longer than the introduction and conclusion *combined*. **Essays that do not meet the minimum length requirement will likely fail and will, at the least, have significant points deducted.**
- **You must include a minimum of 5 credible research sources (which may include primary sources, including films).** The requirements for the types of sources are given at the beginning of this assignment sheet; failure to meet these requirements for research sources **will result in an automatic F on the paper.**
- MLA formatting—typed, Times New Roman 12 point font, double-spaced, 1–1.25 inch margins, with proper heading, title and header with your last name and the page number in the upper right corner of each page. **Improperly formatted essays will have points deducted per the rubric.**
- **You must include a Works Cited page with an entry for each source you use.** You must also include correct **in-text parenthetical citation for all sources you use, whether you quote, paraphrase, or summarize.** Remember that for printed texts, you must parenthetically cite page numbers for paraphrases and summaries of passages, as well as quotations. You also must make clear *which* source you are citing, so since you are using multiple sources, you should include the author's last name (or the first piece of information in the Works Cited entry for a particular source) in your sentence or in a parenthetical citation. **Failure to cite texts both in-text and on the Works Cited page, completely and correctly, will result in significant point deductions and will likely result in an F on the paper.**
- Your essay must be your own original work! If it isn't, it will receive a ZERO and you will fail the course.
- **Essays must be successfully submitted to TurnItIn via the Researched Argument assignment submission link on Canvas in order to be considered “turned in.”** Do not email me the essay or attach the essay to the comment field of the submission link; these

will not qualify as “turned in.” Remember that you must see “Turned In!” with the date and time stamp and your file name after you submit it; this indicates the submission was successful. If it just continues to load and nothing happens, then you may be experiencing a slow Internet connection and you may need to submit from a different computer. You can check that your essay was submitted successfully by returning to the assignment link and looking to see that your file is there, or by going to the Grades Center, which will show a square document icon next to the assignment (and not a dash) if the assignment has been successfully submitted. If all you see is a dash, then Canvas does *not* have your submission. **It is your responsibility to ensure your paper was submitted successfully, using one of these methods. In addition, you should submit early enough to resolve any technical issues that might arise. Technical problems are not accepted as an excuse for late submission.** If you experience a technical problem, use the Help button to contact Canvas technical support; I am unlikely to be able to resolve this for you, unless you receive a message that specifically directs you to your instructor.

Late Submission:

Important: Because this essay is due at the end of the semester, I cannot accept it late, even if you have not used your free pass this semester. I will grant the standard 12-hour grace period, but if the essay is not submitted before NOON on the day following the due date and time, you will be unable to submit and will automatically fail the course.

Grading:

The essay will be graded using the grading rubric posted with the assignment. The paper is worth 250 points, 25% of your course grade.

If you have any questions about this assignment, ask!