Essay #2: Persuasive Essay & Proposal Guidelines

ESSAY FOCUS
Your goal in this essay is to persuade an audience to adopt a specific idea, belief, or behavior. Please note that this is not a research essay, but a persuasive essay with a significant research component.

You should pick a topic that can be argued with facts, data, and scholarly research. An example of a good topic would be: Soldiers in Afghanistan need more bullet proof vests for combat. An example of a poor topic would be: Pomeranians are better dogs than pit-bulls. The first example can be supported by research, the other is largely subjective.

In your essay, you should strive to present multiple perspectives on your topic. In other words, don’t blindly argue your point without acknowledging why other’s believe the way they do. It is perfectly fine to concede certain points or acknowledge opposing opinions as this shows your ability to think carefully and critically about your topic.

While I will not give you a topic to write on, I will, however, ask that you not write on the following topics: (If you’re really dying to write on one of these topics, we can make a compromise; however, I will require that you take an innovative approach to the topic.)

- assisted suicide
- legalization of marijuana
- drug abuse
- raising the legal drinking age
- creationism versus evolution
- animal rights
- abortion
- gun-control
- the death penalty
- global warming
- school testing/NCLB
- gambling
- sex education vs abstinence

One thing you’ll want to think about after choosing a topic is your potential audience. Who, for instance, do you envision to be the primary consumer of your essay, outside of your classmates and me? Who do you want to reach out to in your essay? What audience is it that you seek to convince of your ideas and for what purposes? Let your answers to these questions drive the content of your essay and the research you conduct forward.
PROPOSAL GUIDELINES
Prior to beginning your essay, you will submit a proposal which outlines what you plan to write on. In your proposal, please discuss the following:

1. What your topic is and why you chose it
2. Who the intended audience(s) for your essay might be
3. A brief discussion of your argumentative strategy and points you plan to make
4. Potential rebuttals you might encounter
5. What you want to learn from the research process
6. Afterward, locate 3-5 scholarly sources associated with your topic and cite these sources in your proposal. Under each citation, write a 1 paragraph annotation in which you discuss what this source is about and why you think it might be helpful to you. (You might not necessarily use these sources in your essay, the point is to discover whether or not your topic can be backed up with scholarly data.)

Your proposal should be typed and 1-2 pages in length. Late proposals will not be accepted. You are welcome to use whatever format you think best suits your proposal. Just be sure it is well-organized. Proposals are worth 3 points.

DRAFT #1
For your first draft, you'll want to create an outline of your ideas using the models discussed in class and the examples posted on the course website. Be sure that your outline is detailed and that you include at least three supporting points for each topic sentence.

DRAFT #2
This draft should demonstrate that you’ve spent time developing an argument and organizing your ideas. It should also reflect a variety of persuasive techniques as well as show that you have an awareness of who the audience for your argument might be.

You will need to incorporate a minimum of 3 sources for full credit. Your draft should be a “healthy” length and contain enough writing/research that your classmates and I can give you substantive feedback.

DRAFT #3
This draft should have most of the major components of your final essay in place. You'll still be tweaking paragraphs, reorganizing, and revising, but I should see the final product emerging. In other words, you should be well on your way to creating an effective argument; also remember that you will need to employ all the rhetorical appeals we’ve discussed in class thus far!

You will need to incorporate a minimum of 4 sources for full credit.
FINAL ESSAY
You final essay should be a smart, polished, college-level essay. Be sure that you do the following in your final essay:

✔ Include a clear and meaningful thesis statement
✔ Use strong topic sentences
✔ Address the "so what?" question (Why is what you have to say important? Why should someone read your paper?)
✔ Use transitional phrases and sentences
✔ Include a variety of quotes from your outside sources (both direct & paraphrased—no block quotes unless absolutely necessary, please)
✔ Have properly introduced quotes
✔ Use a varied and sophisticated vocabulary
✔ Demonstrate an awareness of audience
✔ Be free of grammatical errors
✔ Demonstrate a variety of persuasion techniques
✔ Reflect an advanced level of critical thinking and analysis
✔ Meet all source requirements
✔ Include a thoughtful and compelling conclusion
✔ Include any other details/ideas we’ve discussed in class

SOURCE REQUIREMENTS
1. Your final essay should contain 5-7 sources.
2. At least 3 sources must come from a scholarly book, journal, or book article. You may, however, substitute one of these sources for an interview, survey, etc. so long as you discuss it with me beforehand.
3. The other 2 sources you decide to use are up to you. Remember that if you choose to use internet sources, they must be reliable!

IMPORTANT NOTE
Be aware that the research component of this essay constitutes a significant portion of your grade; failing to conduct proper research will quickly sink your otherwise water-tight ship! In addition, please remember that your goal in this essay is to produce a high-quality, college-level essay. While there is no particular page number you should strive for, do be sure that your essay reflects critical thinking, solid research, and a breath of ideas.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES
Proposal = Upload to Angel
Draft #1 = Bring four hard copies to class and upload to Angel
Draft #2 = Bring four hard copies to class and upload to Angel
Draft #3 = Bring four hard copies to class and upload to Angel
Final Essay = Submit with final portfolio

All work is due by the beginning of our class period. Please refer to the course schedule for due dates.
# Essay #2: Persuasive Essay Rubric

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<th>Introduction &amp; Thesis Statement</th>
<th>Content &amp; Analysis</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Introduction is unified; thesis is clearly stated. Purpose of essay and argument is clear.</em></td>
<td><em>Writer presents a compelling, research-based argument to readers; demonstrates an awareness of audience and uses a range of rhetorical devices. Argument is innovative and demonstrates writer’s personal knowledge of content.</em></td>
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<th>Research, Supporting Detail &amp; Documentation</th>
<th>Organization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Writer offers a range of resources/research to support claims; research demonstrates considerable knowledge of subject matter &amp; adds to overall strength of paper in a meaningful way. A variety of quotes and paraphrasing are used. All sources are cited both within the text and on the works cited page.</em></td>
<td><em>Essay is well-organized; topic sentences guide readers through essay; each paragraph is unified.</em></td>
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<th>Grammar &amp; Readability</th>
<th>Overall Assessment</th>
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<td><em>Effective standard English usage—few mechanical errors. Sentence-variety and a nuanced vocabulary are used. Writing style is engaging and informative.</em></td>
<td><em>Essay is persuasive, states ideas and opinions beyond the obvious, reflects writer’s voice &amp; knowledge of facts, data, and research. Essay is of a high academic quality, well-written &amp; credible.</em></td>
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