

Suggested Research Topics for your Essays

Media

Advertisements p. 456
Media censorship
Federal Communication Commission deregulation
Effect of television watching in US p. 259, 346
Movie reviews p. 341, 384
News editing and reporting p. 359

Technology

The Internet – good or bad? P. 225, 406, 458
The Internet – regulate?
E-mail communication p. 401
Identity Theft
Giving out cell phone numbers
Telemarketers – do not call list
Gaming addictions

The World

Lebanon/Syria relationship
US spread of democracy
Genocide in Sudan (and other countries)
Iraqi war/US military presence
US military bases in foreign countries
Chinese & USA trade relations
Cuba & USA trade relations
Israel/Palestine Conflict

Business and the World

English as the primary language of business and trade p. 321, 616
Affirmative action
Corporate Crime
NAFTA
Globalization effects on third world countries p. 295
Illegal Immigrants
Tying CEO salaries to workers lowest wages
The agriculture business today p. 396

The Economy

Social Security Privatization
Medicare/Medicaid
The Homeless p. 236
Welfare p. 495
The Deficit

Health

Obesity in America
Prescription drug controversies
Zoloft/Prozac/Ritalin p.217
Patient's rights legislation
Fast food nation
Eating disorders p. 329
Drug use/legalization p. 267
Vegetarianism
Smoking

Children

The driving age
Death penalty for teens p. 471, 479
Movie ratings
Media violence p. 166, 167
Child molestation

Schools/Education

Too much homework in HS
Use of standardized tests to measure skills proficiency p. 503
School vouchers
Quality of US primary and secondary education p.114, 406
Diversity and HS education p. 189, 406
Quality of US higher education
Athletes and education p.36

Politics

US elections/Electoral College
The Republican party
The two-party system
Patriot Act/right to privacy

Campaign Finance Reform
Definitions of Patriotism
Death penalty p. 471, 479

Church and State

The Ten Commandments publicly displayed
Prayer in the schools

The Environment

Alternative energy sources/oil shortages p.231
Genetically modified foods
Agriculture today p. 396
Preservation of natural spaces p. 464
Global Warming
Overpopulation
Animal rights p. 71, 181, 202

Culture/Discrimination/Race & Gender

Cultural discrimination/differences/diversity p. 63, 99, 158, 259, 345, 433, 436, 616
Racial profiling p. 27
Police relations with racial minorities
Reparations for past discriminations
Burkas and feminism
Treatment of women in other countries
Female circumcision
Plastic surgery
Media portrayal of women and body images p. 122, 171, 329
Gender roles and differences p. 206, 209, 301, 285
Male/female salary differences
Date rape p. 145
Amendment 1/gay rights
The disabled p.111

MAPS p. 174

Media Analysis Essay (25%)

Purpose: Our society is dominated by media and media images – Hollywood movies, 24 hour TV news channels, advertisements, newspapers, magazines, tabloids – we are constantly, daily, being influenced by these media forms in ways we don't even realize. Every political event is conveyed through the media and by definition has "spin" on it – usually intentional. The numbers of people and size of the population are so big that a personal investigation of the facts cannot be had; our knowledge and information must be mediated through the media. Yet we are, as voters, consumers, people with values, on asked to make decisions on it all the time. Nothing in our society requires greater critical thinking and analysis than the media.

Assignment: Your *Media Analysis Essay* will analyze **TWO forms of media** on **ONE current topic** in the news (see list) – one form is **visual** (film, TV, news, documentary), the other is **print** (editorial, news article, essay, book). Using logic and critical analysis, you will first of all **summarize** what each (print/visual) media has to say. You will then **evaluate** how and how effectively the media creators convey information. You will evaluate it based on reason and logic, identifying ethos, pathos, and logos, as well as logical fallacies. You will also evaluate the work based on its rhetorical success, analyzing its unity, coherence, and development of the works as a whole. You will also **compare and contrast** their points as well as their effectiveness. Your paper will conclude with an evaluation of the two forms of media's points, their accuracy and viability. You will then **integrate and synthesize** the messages from each to determine what you see as the most accurate description of the topic under discussion by both. Then you will **present** the media and print form and your analysis of it to the class.

Your **presentation grade** will be based on:

- (1) time limit (10-15 minutes)
- (2) use of visual aid (your visual media source)
- (3) content (explain clearly by:
 - (a) summary and evaluation of both forms of media
 - (b) comparison of forms of media
 - (c) evaluation of the issue and the media's handling of it
- (4) presentation: entertaining and humorous

SAMPLE ESSAYS have included in the past or could include in the future:

- The book "Fast Food Nation" and the documentary "Supersize Me"
- The essay on Maps, p. 174 of your Reid text, and the "West Wing" Season Two show on maps
- A biography on the real life of an Air Force pilot who was shot down, and the movie "Top Gun"
- An article by Senator Edward Kennedy and a segment of Bill O'Reilly's show on same topic
- A segment on Jon Stewart's "The Daily Show" and a mainstream media report of a current news event
- A documentary on the Fox News channel reporting of events and print articles on same event
- A New York Times article and a TV presentation on the same event
- Michael Moore's "Fahrenheit 9/11" and print analysis of the 2004/2000 elections, 9/11 the Iraq War or the Patriot Act.

SAMPLE OUTLINE OF PAPER:

- **Introduction:** Present (name) two forms of media (names, histories, who is involved, where published/first shown)
- Discuss social/political repercussions of them, if any.
- **Body Paragraph One:** Summarize: Describe each media – what does it say? What does it report? Attitudes?
- **Body Paragraph Two:** Evaluate the factual effectiveness of each
- **Body Paragraph Three:** Evaluate the critical thinking involved in each: how do they use logos ethos and pathos? Do they do so honestly and accurately? Are there any logical fallacies employed? Do they each work?
- **Body Paragraph Four:** Compare and contrast the effectiveness of each media presentation and synthesize and integrate them (as well as other sources that add to your knowledge of the topic) and convey the most accurate and reasonable picture of the issue as you can determine.
- **Conclusion**

REQUIREMENTS:

- Your Media Analysis paper is **FOUR (4) pages** long, typed, double spaced (normal size font).
- You must have **IN-TEXT CITATIONS** as well as a **BIBLIOGRAPHY** page.
- You only need to cite the two sources (the primary sources, one print and one visual) that you use in your paper.
- You must have **TWO quotes** (cited).
- You must have **TWO paraphrases/summaries** (cited).
- You must use correct citation format discussed in class: **APA style**.

- As with all your assignments, turn it in with all your work in a two pocket portfolio, in this order:
 - **Final Essay** first;
 - **Rough draft(s)** second;
 - **Peer Review sheets** third;
 - **Pre-writing:** thesis, outline, bibliography, notecards fourth;
 - highlighted **copies of source(s)** last

Cause-Effect Essay (25%)

The Cause-Effect Paper will examine a current event and evaluate its causes and effects (see list of topics). You may write a **causal analysis**, or primarily focus on **effects**, or focus on both **causes AND effects** of the current issue that you choose. It should show effective logic and critical thinking and be free of fallacies, such as “post hoc ergo propter hoc” (after this, therefore, because of this) fallacies. As you analyze the topic, make sure your thinking is not too “short” nor too “long.” Make sure you cover all the major and significant causes (and effects), but do not become so immersed in finding so many causes (and effects) that you start including non-significant ones.

Your Cause-Effect essay will have at least **four sources**, at least two of them must be print sources. The paper will be **four (4) pages** long, typewritten, double-spaced, placed in a two-pocket folder and include:

- outline (preceding),
- bibliography (following) and
- copies of sources used with sections used highlighted (at end of all
- correct APA documentation including at least two quotes and four paraphrases.

Sample Cause/Effect Outlines

Causal Analysis of an Issue

Thesis: The war in Iraq has many causes.

Body Paragraph One (Cause One): Psychological issues w/Bush: agenda to finish his father's war

Body Paragraph Two (Cause Two): Oil & quest for stability: US need to control MidEast politics

Body Paragraph Three (Cause Three): 9/11attack: justification to sell the war

Body Paragraph Four (Cause Four): Journalistic negligence

Body Paragraph Five (Cause Five): Jihadists: Islamic civil war in Iraq

Analysis of Effects of an Issue:

Thesis: The war in Iraq has many effects.

Body Paragraph One (Effect One):

Body Paragraph Two (Effect Two):

Body Paragraph Three (Effect Three):

Body Paragraph Four (Effect Four):

Analysis of Causes AND Effects:

Option One:	Option Two:
Thesis: The war in Iraq has many causes and effects.	Thesis: The war in Iraq has many causes and effects.
Body Paragraph One (Cause One)	Body Paragraph One (Cause One)
Body Paragraph Two (Cause Two)	Body Paragraph Two (Effect One)
Body Paragraph Three (Cause Three)	Body Paragraph Three (Cause Two)
Body Paragraph Four (Effect One)	Body Paragraph Four (Effect Two)
Body Paragraph Five (Effect Two)	Body Paragraph Five (Cause Three)
Body Paragraph Six (Effect Three)	Body Paragraph Six (Effect Three)

OTHER RESOURCES:

http://www.allesaytopics.com/Essay_Categories/analysis_essay.htm

<http://www.accd.edu/sac/english/mgarcia/writfls/modcause.htm>

http://webster.comnet.edu/grammar/composition/cause_effect.htm

http://wps.ablongman.com/long_nadell_writer_5/0,4745,240017-,00.html

<http://glory.gc.maricopa.edu/~kfulong/causeeffectoutline.htm>

<http://www.cameron.edu/~carolynk/cause-effect.html>

<http://www.siue.edu/~smoiles/Ppr2B-101.html>

<http://www.osuokc.onenet.net/~engl1213n/causal.htm>

Argumentative Essay (25%)

Assignment: An Argumentative Research paper will persuade someone to your point of view. You will choose a current, **debatable** topic (see list) and argue for it or against it. Refer to “structure of argumentation” and the readings and the class discussions for more discussion on how to write the argumentative essay.

Your paper will be double spaced, typewritten, **5-6 pages**, and have at least **five sources**, three of them print sources. Using **APA documentation** format with both **in-text citations** and a **references** page, you should have at least two quotes and four paraphrases, using all of your sources. You turn in your paper in a portfolio with a cover page, an abstract, an outline, the argumentative essay itself, and the “references” page. Include your rough drafts and pre-writing in your portfolio after all of the above.

STRUCTURE OF ARGUMENTATION

Introduction:

- Catch reader’s interest with one of the following:
 - Case history
 - Specific example
 - Prediction
 - Startling statistics
- State Thesis (last sentence in introduction) using two elements:
 - Should: your proposal for action
 - Because: your reason(s) which all evidence (body of paper) supports

Counter-Arguments: (refute the opposition/concede minor points with qualifications)

- State first opposition point
 - Refute it with evidence and reasoning
- State second opposition point
 - Refute with evidence and reasoning
- State third opposition point
 - Refute with evidence and reasoning

Body: Support your “because” statement with evidence:

- Facts
- Truths
- Examples: Case histories and scenarios
- Eyewitness accounts
- Statistics
- Reasoning (logos)
- Appeal to morality and reputation (ethos)
- Style, diction and tone: using powerful language (pathos)

Conclusion: Restate Thesis and summarize your arguments