ESSAY #2 SEQUENCE: RESEARCH/INVESTIGATIVE ESSAY

As pre-writing for this essay, students submit two proposals (original and revised) and an outline. Essays are submitted initially as first versions, which are then reviewed by both the instructor and peers, and then revised.

Suggested length: 10-12 pg., typed, double-spaced, plus bibliography and cover letter and photo/visual appendix. Attach to revision the marked-up first version with instructor and peer comments, the previous proposals and a revision cover letter.

This assignment is an investigative or research essay, which asks you to present different perspectives on a specific social or ethical issue of your own choice. This assignment challenges you as a writer to work with and compare various perspectives and sources. We might think of “different perspectives” as contrasting lenses through which to view a social or ethical problem. These lenses might be political (e.g., comparing opposing stances on stem cell research or gun control) or economic, sociological or psychological (e.g., comparing different causal explanations for homelessness in the U.S. or another country).

In your research for this essay, you should draw upon at least ten secondary academic sources such as books and journal articles. You also have the option of drawing upon your own (and others’) life experiences, community service, as well as journalistic and other popular media sources (newspapers, magazines, documentary films). Wikipedia is not acceptable as a source, although it can be a valuable starting point to discover other sources.

For this essay, you should also conduct an interview with someone with expertise or a particular view on an issue. For example, a student writing about health care reform might interview a health care professional (physician, nurse) or spokesperson for a health care advocacy group. Guidelines to successful interviewing will be discussed in class. In-person interviewing is best. If you are writing about an issue in another country, you can interview someone by phone or email. You should incorporate interview material in the revised version.

In the revision, you are also asked to include documentary photographs—or other visual aids such as charts or graphs—within your essay. We will discuss this in class. If you use visual aids within a print text, you should adjust the page length accordingly.

The writing challenges of essay #2 are:

* Prewriting: defining and narrowing your topic; figuring out various angles on the issue;

* Pre-writing: working with secondary sources: note-taking and summarizing;
*Drafting/revising: establishing a context (social or historical) for understanding the importance of your issue; clearly, fairly and comparatively presenting different points of view, drawing upon secondary sources;

*Drafting/revising: establishing an engaging style, maintaining your own voice as a writer.

While crafting this essay, remember that your role as a writer can be (a) to educate your readership and deepen their understanding without taking a stand or (b) to support a particular perspective, while presenting the opposing argument(s) adequately, clearly and fairly.