

ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY

Overview

Previously we focused on analysis, specifically the development of critical commentary on an artwork, providing a well-reasoned interpretation for a popular audience interested in literary art. This final writing project will focus on creating an original argument about a self-selected topic in the discourse on digital culture and technology we will be exploring together. We will also be collaborating with the Writing Center during the drafting process.

Rhetorical Situation / Prompt

In this essay you will write to an academic audience looking for a well-reasoned argument about a contemporary topic in digital culture. The goal will be to provide an intertextual, claim-based argument that develops a critical perspective on digital technology and facilitates new insight into the self-selected topic.

The audience you are writing to here are looking for reference to an existing discourse, reasoned analysis that engages with key ideas or examples in that discourse, and the development of an argument that supports a claim about some insight you have in that discourse. This audience expects to be positioned to understand some aspect of the self-selected topic you identify in the discourse on media and technology, and to reflect on the significance of your claim.

Preparation

In order to write this essay you will need to:

1. Identify a claim, specific idea, viewpoint or subtopic within one of the readings/media on technology and digital culture. The point here is to narrow the scope of your focus to build a starting point.
2. Develop a perspective on what you identify, subjecting it to *analysis*: Do you agree with the claim? Do you want to apply the idea or develop it further? Do you want to challenge or expand the viewpoint to other examples? The point here is to find a direction for your thought within the discourse, which are represented by the text(s) you choose to engage with.
3. Now, think about what your insights are given the perspective you developed in analysis. What is important to notice in your topic, and why? What are the implications of the claims or ideas you engage, and what new understanding can we gain from your perspective on the topic? Reflecting on these kinds of questions will help you orient yourself in the essay and help you develop your claim.

These steps will help you create your discovery draft which will focus on building a clear perspective on the subject that you identify and analyze, positioning you to create a thesis to pursue in your argument in the later drafts.*

*See post on course website "Topics: Technology and the Digital" or email me if you are having trouble developing a perspective.

Process

The draft schedule of tentative due dates for this essay is as follows:

Discovery Draft: 11/19*

Working Draft: 11/30*

Polished Draft: 12/15*

*** The late policy on drafts will apply. See the syllabus section "Late/Missing Assignments" for details.**

For your Discovery Draft focus on identifying the idea/perspective in a source text that will provide your starting point, developing your summary and explication of it, and then exploring your view in analysis (similar to that work done in the Analytical Essay). Subsequent drafts will involve creating a claim and shaping your argument.

Writing Center

This essay sequence *requires* consultation with the Writing Center at least once for drafts. There will be a grade cap on essays that have not made use of the writing center. The maximum grade without a writing center consultation is a B+. Consultation can either be online or face-to-face.

Submission

Bring a printed copy of your draft to class. This copy will be used in peer review. Additionally, submit a digital copy for my feedback in one of two ways:

1. Share the Google document of your essay with tschenold@cornish.edu, enabling comments so I can leave targeted feedback.
2. Email an RTF file as an attachment to tschenold@cornish.edu. Your word processing software will have an ability to "Save As..." to an RTF file. This will ensure that I can handle the file. Please also make sure you name the file "LastnameFirstinitial_ARG.rft" (so, if I were submitting it would be "SchenoldT_ARG.rft").