

Research Paper

Your final paper for this class is the research paper. In keeping with our “utopian” theme, for this assignment, you will be focusing on one aspect of our current society (American or otherwise) that you think should be changed for the better.

The parameters for choosing “one aspect” of our society are a bit broad. You may wish to focus on a specific rule that exists, either in the law or unwritten; you may wish to correct what you feel is a bad socially constructed belief that exists. Or, you may wish to change several features about one area of our society (education, criminal justice, immigration, etc).

You may also wish to use the issue you wrote about in essay 2, and expand it with more ideas and more research, as well as giving it a different thesis (because this is a different type of assignment).

Here are some areas you might want to consider:

- Voting! (electoral college)
- Healthcare (private? public? costs?)
- Drug addiction/rehab
- Minimum wage/living wage
- Welfare
- Student loans/education costs
- Immigration
- Education
- Environment/climate change
- Prisons (private prisons, sentencing, etc)

As in essay 2, you are not limited to simply this list. Whatever you choose, it should be a topic that you will be able to maintain interest in for several weeks.

After choosing your topic, you should do some **preliminary research**. Find out how the topic breaks down, and what the rules currently are. (You can use Wikipedia for background research.) Brainstorm ideas about the **scope** of your change – you want something you can write about for **6-8 pages**, so don’t choose something too big or something too small. If in doubt, run your idea by me.

As you outline and draft your paper, the first half of your paper should be largely expository—that is, **explanation of the problem as it currently exists in society**. What are the laws on this topic? Whom does it affect? How does it affect them? You may want to use some persuasion in this part, to convince us that this is a problem we should focus on.

In the second half, you will be persuading us that you have a solution to this problem, and that you have thought through the consequences of your solution. For example, if your problem is addiction to technology, propose a concrete policy or idea that will help people become less addicted to their devices. Should we limit the time people use technology? Or should we simply provide more opportunities to do things without technology? How would that work? The more thought you have given to your solution, the more you will display critical thinking (and the better your grade).

The paper will be, as mentioned above, **6-8 pages**, NOT counting the Works Cited. Your paper should use at least **four sources**. You will be scored on the thoroughness of your knowledge of the topic (research), the critical thinking displayed in your solution, and your use of sources, as well as usual things like organization, grammar, and MLA format.

Rough draft due: June 22

Final draft due: June 27