LBST 301

ESSAY 3

Objectives for course units 3 and 4: **argumentation and research**

Length: **Eight paragraphs; at least four pages.**

Topic: **Conduct research and construct an argument presenting a clear position on a topic of your choice related to essays we read for the last two parts of the course.**

Choose one of the four **prompts**:

1. Susan Sontag’s “A Woman’s Beauty: Put-Down or Power Source?” (1975), Gretel Ehrlich’s “About Men” (1984), and Stephen Jay Gould's "Women's Brains" (1980) discuss issues of gender stereotypes. Taking these essays as starting point, and considering that the three of them were written decades ago, write your paper about issues of gender stereotypes in our own times. How much has changed? How much is still a problem? The paper must involve research and present and argument (your own position).

2. Virginia Woolf, author of “The Death of the Moth,” suffered from mental illness since she was very young. Taking her essay as starting point, write your paper about mental health issues in the time of COVID-19. Focus on a particular group of people of your choice (children, teenagers, college students, women, members of an ethnic group, the elderly, healthcare workers, etc.). The paper must involve research and present and argument (your own position).

3. Langston Hughes’s “Salvation” is a poignant childhood memory about confusion and disappointment concerning religion. Taking this essay as starting point, write your paper about the role of religious education in our society. Should children receive religious instruction in schools, or should this be a private matter? Should public schools ban scientific theories that are considered to contradict a given religion, such as the theory of evolution? The paper must involve research and present and argument (your own position).

4. Martin Luther King wrote his “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” almost 60 years ago. Taking this document as starting point, write your paper about issues of social justice in our own times. How much of Dr. King’s analysis is still relevant? How much of his approach to the struggle for justice is still useful? The paper must involve research and present and argument (your own position).

WRITING AND REVISING CYCLE

1. **First draft:** Wednesday, November 24 before midnight.
2. **Peer reviews:** Sunday, November 28 by noon.
3. **Second draft:** Friday, December 3 before midnight.

This is you draft revised after receiving your peers’ reviews. I will grade it and return feedback to you within a week.

1. **Final version: Thursday, Dec. 16, 11:55pm.**

GUIDELINES

**General**

• The paper must show careful research and open-minded curiosity about a topic and it must be organized around a clear thesis reflecting your own position.

• I will not judge the particular position the paper presents, but I will evaluate how well constructed and supported the position is.

• The content must be backed up with evidence found in scholarly and other reliable sources (for example, major newspapers, official websites, such as those with URL .org or .gov).

**Sources**

• Required: Consult, cite, and use to support your argument at least four reliable sources. Since the topics can be about current events, instead of four scholarly sources, you only need a minimum of two (either **books** or **peer-reviewed articles**). The other two reliable sources may be websites from a government agency **(.gov**), or recognized organizations **(.org**). Websites whose URL ends in .com will not count toward this minimum.

• Required: Cite all course essays mentioned in your prompt.

• Optional: other websites, reference books (such as encyclopedias and textbooks), non-scholarly articles. To reiterate: these sources may be included if they are relevant, but they will not count towards the minimum requirements.

**Structure**

Paragraph 1: Introduction

* Introduce your topic: what is your paper about?
* Rationale: why is this a relevant, interesting, or significant topic deserving your and your readers’ attention?
* Statement of purpose: For the purpose of this paper, include a sentence explicitly stating what you intend to argue; for example, you may begin with “In this essay I will argue that . . .” As an alternative, instead of a thesis you may present your research question.
* Plan: How do you intend to approach the subject? Give your readers some ideas about how you will construct and support your argument.

Paragraph 2: Literature review

* Briefly discuss the sources you have consulted. Summarize and evaluate main ideas, facts, and positions you have found. Your literature review should answer this kind of questions: What are main views of scholars and experts about your topic? Have you found any opposing arguments? Which information, data, or arguments have contributed more to your own position?

Paragraphs 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7: Your argument (body of the paper)

* Think of each paragraph as a building block to construct your argument. Each one needs to contribute to make your case.
* Organize each paragraph around a main point. Elaborate the central idea and support it with more than one source.
* Paragraphs should be linked to one another with appropriate transitions.
* Address possible objections and counterarguments.

Paragraph 8: Conclusion

* A good conclusion makes sense only after the different parts of the argument have been developed and supported. It cannot repeat the introduction.
* The conclusion should bring together the different parts of the argument.
* Although the conclusion should not discuss new ideas, it may raise new questions or mention aspects that could be addressed in future arguments. It may also offer recommendations in light of the findings.
* Conclusions should be forceful, clear, and offer a sense of completeness.

Citations and Works Cited

* Add citations after paraphrasing and after quoting literally. Literal quotations must be within quotation marks and be followed by a citation.
* Use literal quotations only sparingly and not to make your points, but to support them. They must be followed or preceded by your own commentary.
* Use correct MLA in-text citations (see WR, MLA-4a) and matching complete entries in Works Cited list (see WR, MLA-4b).
* If the sources are journal articles or books, you must include page numbers in the parenthetical citations, even if you read them online. See *A Writer’s Reference* for other details about parenthetical citations and Works Cited.
* Avoid plagiarism. Plagiarism is not limited to reproducing the exact same words without quotation marks or citation: “You commit plagiarism if you patch write—half-copy the author’s sentences, either by mixing the author’s phrases with your own without using quotation marks or by plugging your synonyms into the author’s sentence structure” (WR, MLA section).
* Submissions will be automatically be evaluated by Turnitin.
* Any instance of plagiarism in any of the drafts will result in 0 points for the assignment and the occurrence will also be reported to the Department Chair and the Dean of Students.
* See Academic Integrity statement on syllabus and consult the university statement on plagiarism http://www.fullerton.edu/senate/PDF/300/UPS300-  
  021.pdf. If you still have doubts or questions, ask me before turning in your paper.
* Review all relevant class notes and assigned readings for this semester unit. In particular, read carefully WR sections R1, R2, R3, A6, MLA1, MLA2, MLA3, MLA4, MLA5.
* Use library resources, as presented in the librarian’s video.
* Grading Total possible points for the essay: 100 A = 90-100, B = 80-89, C = 70-79, D = 60-69, F = 59 and below.

**Rubric**

I. Main objectives of units 3 and 4 /10

1. Convincing and cogent argumentation
2. Curious and careful research

II. Basic requirements /15

1. Specific title, length (eight paragraphs, at least 4 full pages)
2. Revisions based on or response to peer feedback
3. Draft submitted on time and following specifications

III. Research /15

1. At least four reliable sources, 2 of them scholarly, are cited
2. All course readings mentioned in your prompt are cited
3. Ideas and data from sources are well used and incorporated in the argument

IV. Argument /20

1. The essay is well focused and organized around a good thesis
2. Ideas are clear and well connected; essay is well thought-out
3. Claims are well-reasoned, supported, and qualified; counterarguments are considered
4. The essay shows critical thinking, personal reflection, and insights

V. Structure and organization /15

1. Clear and complete introduction
2. Body includes literature review, paragraphs are focused and well connected
3. Conclusion answers question, follows from evidence and argument, and it is convincing

VI. Quality of writing and presentation /25

1. Sentence structure and punctuation
2. Grammar
3. Spelling
4. Word choice, clarity, concision
5. Citations, Works Cited, proofreading, format

TOTAL: /100