**Assignment Sheet: Research Project**

**Prospectus Due: 4/2**

**Annotated Bibliography Due: 4/11**

**Peer Review of Projects: 4/24**

**Final Draft Due to Class Blog and Written Reflection Due in Assignments Folder: 4/30**

**Purpose**: This research project is designed to give you the opportunity to practice and build skills in a number of different types of writing and communication: performing research in the library and online, as well as writing and communicating from research, analysis, argument, description, public speaking, and reflection. It’s designed to help you gain basic proficiency with the research process and library use. Doing this project will help you understand how research works: we ask questions and the answers emerge from the research. The research is part of a conversation (through text) about ideas and knowledge. From this project, you should get a sense of how that conversation happens through sources.

**Topic:** Your research topic won’t really be a topic so much as a question—“What’s a Better Idea?”— which sources will lead you to answer. Your job is to start your research by finding one of the sources in the “For Further Reading” section of your favorite *Bad Ideas About Writing* essay. Once you have found that source and read it, track down one of *its* sources and get to know it. Together, these three sources will help you answer the question: you started this research journey with a bad idea about writing—so what is a better idea? The answer to that question should emerge from the sources that you track from BIAW 🡪 FFR source 🡪 Next source.

**How to get started**

1. Start by going back through the BIAW book and identifying your favorite of the essays we have read together (or one that you’ve read on your own) and review that essay.
2. Look in the “For Further Reading” section of that essay, and, using the methods that our librarian has shown you, find the sources in this list that most intrigue you. After spending some time with a couple, pick one.
3. Get to know that source.
4. Look in that source’s notes or bibliography or FFR for a source that most intrigues you. Using the methods that our librarian has shown you, find the sources in this list that most intrigue you. After spending some time with a couple, pick one.
5. Get to know that source.

**What to do next**: You know what the original source says is a bad idea, but what do all three of your sources say is a *better*idea about writing? Sit down with these three sources and review, re-read, and take notes and write about the sources. Establish a habit of writing a little bit every day while we’re working on this project.

**Format:** This project will be in the form of a blog post on our class blog. Blog posts look a lot like papers, but there are some differences—you have to think about order and visuals differently than you do with a paper. Like a paper, this should move sequentially and flow from beginning to end. Unlike a traditional paper, this format asks you to intersperse appropriate visuals / imbed videos or links into this text in a way that enhances (but doesn’t interrupt) the text. You will use parenthetical in-text citations and you’ll have a list of sources at the end. Any images or sound you use needs to be sourced ethically and cited appropriately. Total word count should be between 800-1000.

**Your project needs to have**: 1) an introduction / beginning that establishes which bad idea you’re discussing, why it’s a bad idea, what’s a better idea (your thesis), and why (this is the road-map part; 2) a body/middle that follows the road map, that provides substantial research-based textual support for your thesis, that is ordered in a logical/sequential way; and 3) a conclusion/end that leaves your reader with a new take on the writing idea, a modification, or something to do. In other words, just like in a paper, you need to have a clear argument and support for that argument. You need to present that information by using rhetorical strategies (APATSARC) that you think will be effective for your audience. **You should be writing-writing-writing throughout the process, even if you’re just writing a bunch of messy notes at the beginning.**

**Due on 4/2, your prospectus** will identify your TOP THREE CHOICES from the BIAW source text (rank them from 1 to 3), 1-2 sentences about why you chose each essay, and which source from the “for further reading” section of each BIAW source text you’re going to investigate.

Here is what this might look like:

BIAW Choice 1: "Rhetoric is Synonymous With Empty Speech," by Patricia Roberts-Miller.  I want to research this bad idea and the better idea because I have always heard people talk about "rhetoric" as a bad thing.  The FFR source I think I'll look into is: Chapter 1 of Wayne Booth's Rhetoric of Rhetoric.

BIAW Choice 2: "America is Facing a Literacy Crisis," by Jacob Babb.  I want to research this because it seems to me that we are reading more and more all the time through digital life, and I don't understand why people think we're not.  The FFR source I think I'll look into is Chapter 3 of Deborah Brandt's Literacy in American Lives.

BIAW Choice 3: First-Year Composition Prepares Students for Academic Writing," by Tyler Branson.  I've always thought this was true because it's what we were told.  So I want to know why this guy thinks it's wrong. The FFR source I think I'll look into is John Duffy’s “Essay on the Value of First Year Writing Courses.”

**Due on 4/11, your annotated bibliography** will include complete citations for 3 sources: the original source text from BIAW, the FFR source, and the source that came from the FFR source. You need to also provide an annotation for each source: 2-3 sentences that briefly summarize the source and how it leads you to the “better idea” about writing (so by this time, you should have at least a hunch about what that better idea might be).

**Your project will be graded** with our major project rubric.

\*If you do not want your work to be public-facing, we can talk about that.

**Reflection: Ideas About Writing Project**

1. Write a **one-paragraph introduction to the artifact that articulates your intellectual process for this project**. Put another way, explain where your ideas came from and how they evolved during the course of the project. You should also discuss how the composition process (examples: prewriting, outlining, drafting, peer review, revising, editing) affected your intellectual process, and vice versa.
2. After the introductory paragraph, **compose two or three bullet points answering each of the following questions. Each bullet point should consist of 1-3 complete sentences that directly address the question**. Review the assignment sheet you received for the assignment before composing your answers.
   1. What grade would you give yourself for this project, and why? \*Feel free to look at the major project rubric and use those terms.
   2. What were the main intellectual goals of the assignment? Please situate these goals in terms of the course theme, and in terms of the communication skills you were to learn or practice.
   3. Who is the intended audience for your blog post, and why? How is your choice of audience reflected in it?
   4. What is your argument or purpose, and how did you make the argument or purpose visible and persuasive in your post?
   5. Discuss the technical process of creating this blog post. What was the biggest technical hurdle you encountered and why? What was the easiest technical aspect of this project? What was the most important technical skill you learned? What advice would you give someone using this app / software for the first time?
   6. If you had more time for revision, what would you change and why?

**What a Research Project is and Why You Should Care**

A research project is a writing assignment designed to give you practical experience in using

the library, in gathering material, in taking systematic and helpful notes, tracking a conversation through sources, and in efficiently organizing your judgments or exploratory questions in the writing of a longer project. As a class we will be going through the process of doing a research project by talking about

sources, outlines, organizational strategies, and rough drafts. One can think of the organization of a research project in the following stages:

1. Understanding the assignment (see above)

2. Defining the topic you’d like to pursue (within the framework given by me)

3. Recognizing the questions implied by the topic (questions at issue)

4. Determining the kinds of materials needed to address those questions

5. Gathering materials

6. Abstracting from materials (notes, note cards, outlines, choosing examples and best

sources)

8. Writing

7. Organizing notes into a meaningful pattern

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sources)

8. Writing

5. Gathering materials

6. Abstracting from materials (notes, note cards, outlines, choosing examples and best

sources)

8. Writing

9. Revising

7. Organizing notes into a meaningful pattern

6. Abstracting from materials (notes, note cards, outlines, choosing examples and best

sources)

8. Writing

9. Revising

7. Organizing notes into a meaningful pattern

8. Writing

10. Revising the paper in dialogue with your peer reviewers

9. Revising

11. Proofreading and checking the format of the total project

12. Turning it in on time