

Topic: A Brief Research Paper on a Right Debated in America Today

Length: 1250 words (five full typed pages) minimum

Due Dates:

TUESDAY-THURSDAY CLASS	MONDAY-WEDNESDAY CLASS
EX 4: Tuesday, April 24	EX 4: Monday, April 30
Draft 3A: Tuesday, May 1	Draft 3A: Monday, May 7
Draft 3B: Tuesday, May 8	Draft 3B: Monday, May 14

I call this assignment a “research paper,” as if it were a new kind of assignment. But it’s very similar to Paper 2, except that this time, you won’t take the sources from CA; you’ll have to find them in the library. Paper 3 assumes that you have learned a) how to weave your own thoughts and ideas from sources together into a coherent argument; b) how to do correct MLA citations.

Topic, Question, Background:

Topic: The use of torture and its relationship to the concept of “rights.”

Question: Should the United States allow torture?

Background: In the last few years we’ve heard much about the treatment of prisoners in the “war against terror.” We’ve seen the images and read the accounts of Abu Ghraib; we’ve heard the reports of what goes in Guantanamo. Politicians, lawyers and philosophers have given their opinions attacking or defending the right of the American government to use extreme methods in order to get information from persons in its custody

Your thesis will be your answer to the question. To develop an answer, you will need to

- present **facts** about the use of torture by the American government;
- present **arguments for and against** the use of torture;
- **analyze these facts and arguments** and
- use them to **develop your own position** (summarized in your thesis).

Method:

- A) First, **explore your own first thoughts on the topic**. You can do this by answering the questions on the sheet attached to this assignment.
- B) Then **use library resources** to gather the facts so that you can report what the issue is, why it is important, and why it is contested. In looking for the facts, think in terms of the so-called journalist's questions: *who, what, when, where, why and how*. Find **three or four sources** that give you these facts; only one of these may be a website. Wikipedia is ruled out.
- C) Next, **find two to four arguments** (usually articles) that address the question. One should answer the question in the affirmative; another should answer in the negative; the others may give answers that are somewhere in between.
- D) Make notes on your research material, **develop a working thesis** (the answer to your research question), **organize points in support of the thesis**, and begin drafting.

You can do some of this work from home by accessing the DVC Library website, but assume that you will have to spend some time in the library. Our library has plenty of good material on current topics, both in books and in its periodical collection. I expect you not only to learn how to use library resources but also to make time to find articles and books. You should check ALICE and the periodical databases such as Expanded Academic ASAP. You should actually talk to a librarian, who will be more than happy to help you. Consult QA Chapter 30, "Research Writing as a Process," Chapter 31, "Finding and Evaluating Sources," pp. 335-369, to learn how to choose and evaluate sources.

EX 4 and the Drafts: In this paper, you'll submit preliminary notes (which will count as EX 4) and two formal drafts.

EX 4 must include the following:

- A) An explanation of the topic (at least one half of a page);
- B) Your first thoughts the topic (at least a half of a page);
- D) A summary of an article that argues in the affirmative (at least half a page);
- E) A summary of an article that argues in the negative (at least half a page);
- F) Correct terminal citations for the two articles.

EX 4 should be at least two and half pages (excluding the works cited page).

In the **drafts**, present the facts, summarize and analyze the arguments, discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each argument in light of the facts and your own beliefs and values, and, finally, present your own reasoned argument. As part of your own argument, make sure you refer to the facts you have presented and the other two arguments. Use the rhetorical appeals (logos, ethos, pathos) appropriately.

Thesis: Aim at a thesis that is at least level two and perhaps level three.

Audience: Write to a general, educated reader who is unfamiliar with you or with this assignment (that is, not me, not your classmates), and unfamiliar with some or all of the readings.

Voice: You should sound engaging, mature, and intelligent.

Citations: Follow the MLA format presented in QA. If you did not get these rules right in Paper 2, get them right now. I will be much less tolerant of citation errors in Paper 3.

Title: As with your first two papers, compose an effective title—one that attracts a reader's attention and identifies your specific view of the topic. A title is an important rhetorical device most students ignore.

Format: Follow the rules for typing your papers on p. 5 of the syllabus.

Grading: I'll evaluate your paper on the overall intelligence and effectiveness of the argument, use of logos, ethos, pathos, depth of research, appropriateness of sources, critique of and insight into these sources, organization, voice, sense of audience, use of rhetorical appeals, command of Standard English grammar, sentence structure, diction, and spelling, and adherence to the format rules.