

Research Paper

You will write a **well-analyzed research paper** using secondary research techniques. You can choose your own topic, but I must approve of the topic. General topics that are **off limits** include (but are not limited to):

- Abortion
- Gun control
- Capitol punishment (death penalty)
- Hate speech or denigration of a group of people (e.g. “why gay marriage is immoral or sinful”)
- Religion

Good topics require **analysis**. This paper is not a simple exercise in research; do not write a paper that only dumps information on the page. An “info dump” lists information and quotations without analysis. You must think about and reason through your thought process.

Begin with a question: *Which is better, whiteboards or chalkboards?* Then do some preliminary research and hone your question. This narrow question typically uses a **keyword**. What is the keyword for this revised question: *Which is better for the environment, whiteboards or chalkboards?* After doing some preliminary research, you might come up with several questions. How might you research and write a paper when starting with one of the following questions?

- *Do college professors prefer whiteboards or chalkboards?*
- *How environmentally dangerous are whiteboard pens, like Expo markers?*
- *What is financially more feasible, whiteboards or chalkboards (including costs for purchase, installation, and maintenance)?*

Your research paper will demonstrate effective understanding of the course objectives:

- Clear and effective communication of meaning.
- An identifiable focus on one topic (a clear thesis and support of that idea).
- An appropriate voice (college-level language) that demonstrates awareness of audience and purpose.
- Careful attention to review and revision as demonstrated through drafts, workshops, and final paper.
- Effective and correct use of supporting materials based on your research (e.g., quoting, paraphrasing, summarizing, and citing sources).
- Effective analysis, interpretation, evaluation, and synthesis of ideas encountered in your research.
- Effective organization and development of ideas at paragraph and essay levels.
- Appropriate and effective sentence structure and diction.
- Command of conventional mechanics (e.g., punctuation, spelling, reference, agreement).

Research papers are not personal. You cannot use “I” in your paper. Focus on the issue and those whose expertise you cite (i.e. your sources).

LENGTH: 2000-2500 words (approximately 6-8 pages double-spaced). This page/word count does **not** include your annotated bibliography.

FORMAT: Use 12-point Times or Times New Roman for your font, and **staple** your research paper. Margins should be 1-1.25” on the sides and 1” top and bottom. Follow either MLA or APA format, as listed in the textbook. (If you prefer the style guide for your major, see me for an exception to this.)

COMPONENTS IN THE COMPLETED VERSION:

- An appropriate title
- Properly cited sources
- Body of the paper (use of sections/subheadings is OK)
- Annotated bibliography including at least six sources (three must be peer-reviewed/journal articles)

You will turn in various other assignments associated with the research paper, including a draft.

WORKSHOP:

Bring three (3) copies of your research paper to the workshop. Workshop attendance is mandatory.

All papers are due at the beginning of class on May 12th 2011.