

Major Paper 2: Academic Research Paper on the Theme of Diversity

Words words words words words
Look scholarly on page but
Do I have a point? – Kathy Leslie

The purpose of MP 2 is 1) to learn how to do academic research and evaluate sources and 2) to enter the existing academic conversation on your topic and contribute with a well-crafted argument. The Burkean dialogue screenplay (SA 3) should have informed you on the type of academic conversation happening on your topic: the key ideas, issues, existing arguments and debates in that conversation.

Your rhetorical situation:

This paper allows you to delve into the dialogue/conversation that you set up in SA 3. Putting yourself in conversation with your academic sources, write a **5-7 page** paper in which you present your own argument on the topic. Besides using 3-4 scholarly sources, draw on either **Walter Benn Michaels' The Trouble with Diversity** (CI, 783) or **Mary Louise Pratt's Arts of the Contact Zone** (CI, 821) to apply one of the author's ideas/theory on your argument. You may use Michaels or Pratt to support your argument. Or you might disagree with the chosen author in light of your evidence and argument.

Your paper should provide a persuasive, interesting and well-organized argument with substantiated evidence analysis. Here are some guidelines to aim for:

- Effectively follows the genre conventions of an academic essay (Outcome 1)
- Shows an understanding of the existing conversation on the topic and specifies the focus of the paper (Outcome 1)
- Makes an arguable and interesting **complex claim** on the issue (Outcome 3)
- Utilizes an organizational strategy that shows how the complex claim is developed with minor claims and evidence (Outcome 3)
- Uses quotes/paraphrases as evidence from sources and provide an analysis of them, demonstrating intertextuality (Outcome 2)
- Addresses a counterargument/concession in order to support the complex claim (Outcome 2)
- Provides a discussion of stakes of the argument (Outcome 3)
- Uses MLA style for both in-text citations and works cited page (Outcome 2)

Research:

The **3-4 secondary sources** you use here should meet the criteria of scholarly sources, i.e. they should be from peer-reviewed academic journals or book chapters and should have a bibliography list.

Academic Audience:

You're writing to your class, a diverse college audience who appreciates good analysis, but may have no background on your topic. So you'll need to give any key contextual info about your topic and provide clear definitions of any jargon. Use academic, formal language in a clear and precise prose.

Logistics:

5-7 pages; 12-point Times New Roman, double-spaced

Use 1-inch margins

In-text citations and works cited page in MLA style

Due date: **5/16 (Mon) before midnight** on Canvas

Targeted Course Outcomes: 1, 2 & 3

1. To demonstrate an awareness of the strategies that writers use in different writing contexts.

- The writing employs style, tone, and conventions appropriate to the demands of a particular genre and situation.
- The writer is able to demonstrate the ability to write for different audiences and contexts, both within and outside the university classroom.
- The writing has a clear understanding of its audience, and various aspects of the writing (mode of inquiry, content, structure, appeals, tone, sentences, and word choice) address and are strategically pitched to that audience.
- The writer articulates and assesses the effects of his or her writing choices.

2. To read, analyze, and synthesize complex texts and incorporate multiple kinds of evidence purposefully in order to generate and support writing.

- The writing demonstrates an understanding of the course texts as necessary for the purpose at hand.
- Course texts are used in strategic, focused ways (for example: summarized, cited, applied, challenged, re-contextualized) to support the goals of the writing.
- The writing is intertextual, meaning that a “conversation” between texts and ideas is created in support of the writer’s goals.
- The writer is able to utilize multiple kinds of evidence gathered from various sources (primary and secondary – for example, library research, interviews, questionnaires, observations, cultural artifacts) in order to support writing goals.
- The writing demonstrates responsible use of the MLA (or other appropriate) system of documenting sources.

3. To produce complex, analytic, persuasive arguments that matter in academic contexts.

- The argument is appropriately complex, based in a claim that emerges from and explores a line of inquiry.
- The stakes of the argument, why what is being argued matters, are articulated and persuasive.
- The argument involves analysis, which is the close scrutiny and examination of evidence and assumptions in support of a larger set of ideas.
- The argument is persuasive, taking into consideration counterclaims and multiple points of view as it generates its own perspective and position.
- The argument utilizes a clear organizational strategy and effective transitions that develop its line of inquiry.

¹This is the final paper of Sequence 2, academic writing. I found that tying the class with a theme for this sequence was immensely helpful because it pushes students to come up with topics that are focused,

challenging and feasible, whereas when I used to give free rein with the topic choice, there were often some students who would write things that are too broad like writing about the weather and mood which bored me to tears. For this assignment, I encouraged students to approach the theme “diversity” in their own definition as long as they can convince the reader that it’s a valid way of looking at diversity. Students have written about the lack of diversity in Hollywood films and representations, how private vs. public school system is connected to diversity issues, the need for diversifying the curriculum in K-12 education, etc.