

# Senior Project Research Writing Guide

## 1. Two-Page Essay, Declaring a Topic (Due week two):

An **exploratory** essay which presents your interests and some of your initial ideas. Use *Massive Change* as a conceptual tool. How does this book speak to you? Consider the various chapters. Select one, and address its usefulness to your interests and potential topic. Use the book as a springboard for discussion and comment upon why a particular problem or issue is of concern to you. What would you like to learn?

## 2. Statement of Purpose & Intent (Due week three):

A focused, one to two paragraph statement explaining the scope of your research project. Remember that the best statements grab the reader/ listener from the beginning. Find your hook. Next, elaborate on the issue or problem. At this point, you haven't done research, so just outline what is commonly known about this issue. Finally, what do you propose to investigate in this project, and who do you intend to reach (who is your targeted audience)? What would you like to learn? And, what might you hope to contribute to the discourse?

## 3. Thesis Statement and Five – Six Page Essay (Due week 8):

The first draft of your thesis paper. It should contain all of the basic components including, an introduction, a statement of your methodology, a thesis statement, and supporting paragraphs that develop your argument. Make sure to include citations in the MLA style as needed, and to also attach a Works Cited page at the end.

•**Introduction** (anywhere from 1– 3 paragraphs): as in your statement of purpose and intent, the opening sentence of your paper will require a hook—something sensational to grab the reader's attention. This could be a mind-boggling statistic, or the announcement of a new discovery. From there, you will want to respond to this information. Your response might introduce some conflict or tension. Now, you have created your point of entry into the topic, and you are ready to introduce the subject and scope of your paper. From there, you should introduce the kinds of evidence your paper will be utilizing (i.e., personal interviews, market research, popular fiction, child psychology, cultural studies, etc.). This is your methodology, and it indicates to the reader how you intend to build your case. All the above can be considered the lead up to your thesis—a one to two sentence statement, which presents your perspective, your point of view, what you intend to argue.

Because these components are essential to the final version of your senior thesis paper, please highlight and label your methodology and thesis in this first draft.

•**Body:** This is the main substance of your paper, where you implement your research findings to develop your argument (thesis statement). Most often, research papers begin with an overview of the existing research on the subject. By demonstrating your familiarity with an existing body of knowledge, you become a more credible and authoritative spokesperson on the subject.

Some pointers:

- Make sure to begin each paragraph with a topic sentence to introduce the evidence to be examined in the paragraph.
- Vary your language; in other words, don't begin each sentence in the same fashion.
- Pose questions.
- Write in the active voice.
- Eliminate unnecessary words, as they dilute the impact of your writing.

**4. Eight – ten page essay and conclusion (Due week 11):**

An expanded version of the five – six page paper; a rough draft of the final thesis paper. This paper should obviously include all of the same components as the 5 – 6 page paper. You should also re-submit the 5-6 page paper along with your instructor’s comments, as you will be graded upon your responsiveness to those comments. The paper should present all of your research. And, now that you have included all of your research, you should write a conclusion, which synthesizes all of your research, to declare your position on the topic. Please highlight and label your conclusion.

**5. Creative Brief (Due week 12):**

This is a 2 – 3 page document that outlines the strategic direction for creative development, covering the specific tasks at hand, the communication objectives, the target audience, and strategies leading the design process. It also outlines any elements that the proposed project must contain. The Creative Brief provides a description of the project, answering strategic questions designed to set the specific parameters of your Advertising, Graphic Design or Illustration project. [Sample questions specific to Advertising, Graphic Design and Illustration projects will be written and discussed at the time the Creative Brief is assigned]

**6. Final thesis paper, bibliography, and Creative Brief (Due week 14):**

A focused, organized, well-researched 10-page paper, which includes the components from the earlier versions. Your bibliographic citations should follow the MLA citation style, and should be presented on separate pages at the end of your paper. Make sure to alphabetize your bibliographic entries. The bibliography and creative brief do not count toward the 10-page research paper. You will be marked down for typos, spelling errors, and improper grammar and syntax. Please consult the grading criteria in your syllabus.

**7. Research Book (Due week 15):**

A professional, well-designed, presentation of your research—both formal and informal—which demonstrates the research process over the past semester. Your research should be presented in a 2 – 3 inch labeled binder. The binder must be indexed according to the various kinds of research you have amassed over the semester. You should also include your notes on your research, as well as the various drafts of your paper, and feedback on your presentations. Consider this as a conceptual record of your progress. The research book will be graded upon its organization and presentation, along with the quality of the research.

**Format for all writing assignments**

- All papers must be titled to identify the assignment.
- All papers must have, in the top right corner:
  1. your name
  2. the assignment title
  3. the course name
  4. the date turned in
- All papers with multiple pages must be stapled
- Margins: 1”
- Type Face: Times New Roman
- Leading: Double spaced, auto leading
- Kerning: 0

**ALL WRITING ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE READY TO TURN IN AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS ON THE DUE DATE.**