

Paper 1: Conventions of Research and Writing Executive Summary

WRTG 3030: Environmental Health Science, Policy, and Ethics

General Overview: Purpose of the Collaborative Paper Assignment

This collaborative writing assignment requires your group to explain how you view the conventions of research and writing in the particular field and/or subfield you have chosen to explore. This is to say that your group needs to identify key expectations of research and writing that characterizes the discipline or subfield of the CU profession your group has decided to research: how would your group define good research and writing in this scholar's field?

The broad practical aim of this assignment is to have you develop a better understanding of how to write better thesis-driven and evidence-based academic writing that will be required of you at CU, regardless of your major. More specifically for our purposes, you are encouraged to write a research paper for this class that could also satisfy a term paper requirement for another class in your declared major, or to write the rough draft of a senior thesis or honor's thesis you know you will have to write in the near future, or to write a rough draft of a research paper that you might want to submit as a writing sample for your application to graduate school or law school or an internship or a job. The point here is to make the writing for this class relevant to you and your discipline-specific studies or some scholarly interest you have.

To this end, this assignment intends to have you better understand what it takes to write a quality research paper in your field or subfield, which will help you write a stronger paper for this class too.

Specific Directions

In 3-4 single-spaced pages (1-inch margins, 12-point font), write a cohesive essay that answers the three broad questions below, which your research on a CU professor should prepare you to answer. By "cohesive" I mean that your group should *not* submit a paper in a question-and-answer format: rather, your executive summary should read like a position paper in which you construct an educated and informed argument—where the central thesis you defend explains what your group believes is expected of scholars with their research and writing in your particular field.

If your group is interdisciplinary (if you have distinct majors or subfields), you should defend a thesis about which *common* conventions of research and writing are expected of scholars across your fields.

You might consider creating a section in your executive summary for each of these three questions.

1. How would you describe the scholar you have chosen to focus on?

- Consider this section as your introduction—giving your reader background to understand your argument about discipline- or subfield-specific conventions in response to Question 3.
- Are there facts about the professor's personal background that are relevant to the sort of research your scholar produces? If so, what are they and why are they relevant?
- What field(s), sub-discipline(s), and topic(s) is your scholar writing about? Is the work interdisciplinary? Does it inform public policy? What questions is your scholar asking?
- What peer-reviewed venues is your scholar publishing in? Are they the leading journals and academic presses (how can you tell)? Are they discipline-specific or interdisciplinary? Are your scholar's publications influential—are they cited a lot, do they generate a lot of discussion and debate among other scholars, is it shaping contemporary social policies?

2. Concisely explain each of the three peer-reviewed publications your group has identified as representing your scholar's broader body of work or research agenda.

- These may include any peer-reviewed (scholarly) work: journal articles, book chapters, books, reports, policy summaries, etcetera.
- If you have questions about what constitutes an acceptable peer-reviewed publication, it is your group's responsibility to ask me.

- Some categories of publications to avoid: non-peer-reviewed articles in scholarly journals, self-published material, newspaper articles and editorials, blog posts, conference papers, works in progress, unpublished manuscripts, twitter feeds!, etcetera.
- What is the central question each publication asks (implicitly or explicitly): that is, what is the subject of the publication?
- What is the nutshell argument your scholar makes in each publication?
- What is the aim of each publication, and who is the likely target audience?
- If there are relevant overlaps your group sees across these publications, there is no need to be redundant here and repeat these ideas for each publication. For example, if these publications have common themes/topics, research questions, arguments, examples or data, implications or policy recommendations, etcetera, then find ways to structure your explanation of these publications around these commonalities.

3. Given this representative sample of publications your scholar has authored, what conventions of research and writing apply to all research in this scholar's discipline or subfield of study? Your response here should constitute the bulk of your paper.

- This section should defend your central thesis by drawing on the previous section and your analysis of your scholar's three publications.
- Your task here, in other words, is to explain and to defend what you see as common conventions of research and writing that define your scholar's field or subfield.
- Avoid a laundry list of conventions—rather, discuss in detail the 6-7 key conventions you see.

Regarding Conventions of Research:

- What types of questions are asked and what types of thesis statements are defended in this discipline or subfield (conceptual, interpretive, descriptive, empirical, normative)?
- What counts as acceptable evidence? (Quantitative data from observational studies, surveys, or experiments? Case studies or historical examples (qualitative data)? Personal observations, anecdotes, interviews? Logical reasoning, ethical principles, analogies and examples (whether real-world, hypothetical, or counterfactual examples)?
- What methodology or mixed methods are used to analyze this evidence? (For example, descriptive narratives, logical analysis, detailed case study analysis (or "process-tracing"), statistical analysis (analyzing large datasets and interpreting regression tables)?

Regarding Conventions of Writing:

- What presentation style defines your scholar's discipline or subfield? (For example, is the scholarship strictly text-based or does it integrate different media, such as images, graphs and charts, tables, and other illustrations?)
- What organizational style defines your scholar's discipline or subfield? (For example, how long is a typical text? Do scholars offer introductions that demonstrates the broad relevance of their arguments? Do scholars follow a typical 5-section academic essay: introduction, background, argument and analysis, possible objections, and conclusion? Do scholars blue-print or foreshadow the content of their publications, and do they use a less-structured narrative style or do they divide the text into sections (using signposts)?
- What writing style defines your scholar's discipline or subfield? (For example, what language is commonly used—more common/approachable or more academic/technical vernacular? Do scholars write in the first-person singular ("I"), or do they use first-person plural ("we") or third-person ("s/he") pronouns? Do scholars use a passive or active voice (e.g., "Confirmed by this study is that..." versus "My study confirms that...")? Are typical sentences short ("simple") or long ("complex"), cumbersome or concise, consistent or varied? What type of citation style do scholars typically use (APA, MLA, Chicago)?

Paper 1 Grading Rubric

Student Name: _____

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<i>Specific Requirements</i>	<i>Poor/ Omitted</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>% of Total Earned</i>
Introduction (10%): explain in detail how your group would describe the scholar you have chosen to focus on—answering some or all of the questions in the directions provided for this section.	✓	✓	✓	✓	%
Thesis (5%): clearly state the claim your group is defending about which common conventions of research and writing are expected of all scholarship in your scholar’s field or subfield.					
Survey of Three Publications (30%): concisely explain each of the three peer-reviewed publications your group has identified as representing your scholar’s broader body of work or research agenda—answering some or all of the questions in the directions provided for this section.					
Universal Conventions of Research and Writing (40%): given this representative subset of publications your scholar has produced, explain and defend what you see as the key (6-7) common conventions of research and writing that define your scholar’s field or subfield—answering some or all of the questions in the directions provided for this section.					
<p>Citations and Bibliography (5%): all quotes, paraphrases, and summaries must be cited using in-text citations or footnotes. Specific page numbers must be provided with each text citation. (If the text lacks page numbers, include n.p. (no page) in the citation.)</p> <p>At the end of your essay, you must also include the full citations of all your sources—using MLA, APA, or Chicago style (choose one style)—and the bibliography must be properly alphabetized. This does <u>not</u> count toward the minimum page requirement.</p>					
Evaluation of Student Participation (10%): each student will be responsible for critically reflecting on the individual contribution her/his classmate(s) made to this group project, and to evaluate the extent and quality of this participation by writing a short justification of the participation grade s/he believes the classmate(s) deserves. (For any group of 3, the scores in these evaluations will be averaged,)					
<p>Grade:</p> <p>Additional Comments:</p>					