Librarians at BGSU formed “Understanding Student Information-seeking Behaviors to Enhance Student Learning”, a faculty learning community through the campus Center for Teaching and Learning. Members of this learning community are BGSU faculty from several disciplines across campus. Through the community we have explored ways to improve students’ abilities to contend with obstacles inherent in the research project. The community has also had opportunities to become more familiar with the University Libraries’ research tools and reflect on ways to enhance student learning. This guide pulls together readings on student research habits and recommendations from faculty about how to improve the student research experience.

The following assignment was created by one of the members of our learning community. It was reviewed by the community and established as meeting the above criteria. For additional sample assignments or information on creating effective research assignments, visit our LibGuide:

http://libguides.bgsu.edu/studentresearch

2011-2012 Understanding Student Information-seeking Behaviors to Enhance Student Learning

Learning Community Facilitators:
Colleen Boff, University Libraries (UL)
Vera Lux, UL

Faculty Members:
Catherine Cassara, Journalism/PR
Lynn Darby, Exercise Physiology
Elizabeth Fleitz Kuechenmeister, General Studies Writing (GSW)
Cheryl Hoy, GSW
Nicole Kalaf-Hughes, Political Science
Cynthia Mahaffey, GSW and Women’s Studies

Questions about the learning community can be directed to Colleen Boff cboff@bgsu.edu or Vera Lux vlux@bgsu.edu
In the Research Essay #4, you will be choosing a research question/thesis/argument based on 10 scholarly articles on any social science argument/research topic of your choice, with a 10 page minimum requirement. You may continue with some topic in homelessness in America, but are not required to. In the Research Essay #4, you are choosing an argument thesis based on the content and using a comparative approach to making your thesis: For instance, “Children in poverty must be afforded proper schooling by the local school district in order to make gains commensurate with their more affluent peers.” As you can see here, your argument thesis must contain or imply a solution. You will be comparing and synthesizing the authors’ views and your own to back up YOUR argument in this essay, and backing up your views with those authors’ scholarly arguments in each body paragraph.

The following topics MAY NOT be used for this or any paper in this class: abortion, capital punishment, euthanasia, animal testing, paranormal occurrences, God, school uniforms, the drinking age, legalization of marijuana, gun control, parking problems at BGSU, fraternities, hazing, senior citizens’ driving, cheerleading as a sport. After teaching college composition for 22 years, you must trust that these topics are not useful in expanding your understanding of writing academic research papers (or of my sanity😊). Pick a topic that you care about and your writing will go much faster and more easily.

Title Page

Statement of the problem [These subheadings should be centered and boldfaced] 2-3 paragraphs

--A jazzy intro: a scenario, presentation of splashy statistics or studies, a story --You do not need to introduce articles and authors here, except as you quote them or cite them. . Full bibliographic material will go in the References Page at the end.
--Your rationale for writing.
-A statement of your research question, stated as a statement. This is your thesis/argument. Don’t ask questions: make strong statements.

**Background of the problem** (3-5 paragraphs)
-Why is there a problem? (A comparison/contrast discussion among the three (or more) authors and articles you chose about the reasons and history of the problem)-
-e.g. "Smith (2008) notes," ….” (p. ). Jones (2007), on the other hand, argues that.... Spitzer (2009) agrees, stating...
--Definitions of any technical terms not familiar to laypersons

**Authors' solutions** (5-8 paragraphs)
--What are the remedies to the problem/issue? Devote one paragraph to each solution, with a synthesis of authors on that solution in each paragraph. Each paragraph should also contain counter-arguments and rebuttals (why the counter-arguments are not valid). **Synthesis** includes a comparison/contrast discussion among the authors concerning the remedies, with metadiscourse from you explaining and interpreting their ideas as they support your points. Same APA format for in-text as above.

**Authors' conclusions** (1-2 paragraphs)
--If the remedies are applied, what will result for the population (e.g. minority students)? Again, a comparison/contrast of authors is necessary, with your metadiscourse.

**Future Recommendations or Gaps in the Research** (1-2 paragraphs)
--Argue for which you think is best
--Say why this problem is important for you, for society
--Mention any areas where you thought there were gaps in the research or future recommendations for study. You may also write about a solution you have thought about, that is not mentioned by your authors.
(This is your conclusion)
References page
Use proper APA documentation, as set out in your chosen handbook. An online tool such as Knight Cite, may be used, but be sure to check it with your handbook. You must use at least 10 scholarly sources.

Parameters for the essay
Essay should be at least 10 pages, typed in Times New Roman font, 12 point, double-spaced. You must include Title and References pages in APA style.

Please transfer due dates from your syllabus to this assignment sheet, so can you stay current in your work.

STEP 1: Decide on your research question, write a thesis, and submit a Research Proposal (your research question stated as an argument statement which implies a solution).

First, think about the social issue you want to tackle for this paper. Remember, the format is just like Multiple Source Essay #1, but you are picking the topic. So let’s start there, with a research question which you will make into an argument thesis:

How does __________ affect __________ in ____________?

(variable) (variable) (population)

Variables could be issues like: poverty, depression, heterosexuality, schooling, school funding, racial discrimination, profiling, sexual orientation, economic status (i.e. class), age, education, clean water, environmental pollution, foreign plant or animal species invasion, recreational camping, sport fishing, nutrition, prenatal care…. If you have a possibility, ask me.

Population is the group of people on whom you will be focusing: preschool children, grade school children, high school aged persons, young adults, college students, the elderly, men, women, girls, boys, babies, middle-aged persons (like your professor), African Americans, LGBT persons, Hispanics, Asian-Americans, rural whites….

To locate 10 scholarly articles on a new social issue, use EBSCO to find your
articles, save them in your EBSCO folder, and share them with me. Please check your articles and topic with me before beginning the essay. Use the following format and sections. These subheadings each represent sections and these subheadings should be typed into your paper, centered and boldfaced. To get an idea of how effective essays look, check out the Model Essays under COURSE DOCUMENTS. These are from my last semester’s students.

Choose one or more articles from my reading list, for a total of three (or more) articles on some topic you will argue on homelessness. For example:

“Local governments should assist returning veterans with services so they can find adequate, affordable housing.”

“Local governments should assist homeless teens with finding necessary psychological, medical and housing services.”

Assignment:

Turn in an outline, web or matrix (see Course Documents for examples of these organizational strategies) which shows how you will organize your scholarly argument. Include your thesis at the top. Scanning a web or matrix which is hand-drawn is acceptable for submission, but it must be very complete, as should the outline. Include topic sentences (each topic sentence should be a supporting reason for your argument, in each section and in each paragraph). Include counter-arguments and rebuttals. Include authors at each point whom you will use. Save this to Google Documents and to your e-portfolio “MyFiles” and turn in to me.

STEP 2: Read your articles and make an annotated bibliography

Assignment:

Construct a properly APA formatted Annotated Bibliography of the 10 articles you have chosen for this scholarly argument/research essay. (See External Links for “How to Write an Annotated Bibliography”, using APA style). For each article, you should have the bibliographic reference, followed by 5-6 sentences of critical evaluation (using the techniques you used in your Essay #1 Critique), concerning the thesis of the article, the uses of this article to support or oppose your argument, the currency, validity and relevance of the article. All annotations and references in APA are double-spaced and in alphabetical order. Second and following lines
are indented 5 spaces. No extra lines are included between references. Save this to Google Documents and to your e-portfolio “MyFiles” and turn in to me.

**STEP 3: Write a References page and write the rough draft**

1. Construct a complete References page by simply deleting the annotations and keeping the double-spacing. There must be at least 10 articles, though you may use more.

2. Use the organization strategy listed above to type a template of subheadings for the case study approach: Title of your essay, Statement of the problem, Background of the problem, Authors’ solutions, Authors’ conclusions, and Gaps in the research and future recommendations.

3. Read through each article and highlight/color code your information, for example, “Background of the problem” information might be in blue, “Authors’ solutions” in green, “Authors’ conclusions” in yellow. Once you have the reading completed, transfer WITH CITATIONS (Last name, year), the color coded information into each subheading.

4. Now begin writing your rough drafting using this template to support your arguments. Write metadiscourse which sets out your argument, interprets your authors, and provides counter-arguments and rebuttals. Check that you are comparing or contrasting two or more authors’ ideas per body paragraph, synthesizing and interpreting them with your own ideas and metadiscourse.

5. Write transition sentences between each paragraph and between each section. Write real transitions which connect the ideas of the two sections and/or two paragraphs. **Make intellectual transitions!**

6. Submit your rough draft to Peer Revision Groups. You must add comments to 5 other persons’ drafts. If someone already has revision comments from five peers, move on to someone who does not.

7. Save your rough drafts with peer comments to Google Documents and to your e-portfolio “MyFiles” and turn in to me. A WORD TO THE WISE: If you submit a completely finished rough draft, I can give you the best help. This includes completed title and references pages, spell- and grammar-checking, and in-text
citations completed. Please turn in a complete rough draft. I will not review an incomplete draft, nor can any final draft you turn in be revised. If you have questions, address them to me BEFORE you submit your rough draft.

**STEP 4: Revise and write your final draft**

1. Revise your rough draft, using suggestions from your peers and from me.

2. When you have completed the revision and produced a polished final draft, fill out the student evaluation section of the rubric, save your final draft to Google Documents and to your e-portfolio “MyFiles” and turn in to me.