

## TOPIC PROPOSAL & ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Rough draft due for in-class peer review: **03/07**

Final draft due: **03/19**

### Rhetorical Situation

Professionals and scholars write memorandums to superiors to propose projects. For this assignment, you will write a formal proposal with the purpose of persuading your instructor that you have identified a viable research question this semester. This project ties directly into the research paper you will be writing, and should help you prepare for that assignment. This proposal should be asking a question about the general topic you were assigned by Professor Handy.

### Format

Your margins, spacing (1.5'-2'), headers, and pagination should follow Chicago formatting guidelines. Your proposal should be at least **2 pages** in length and include bold headers for the Introduction, Rationale, and Request for Approval.

### Introduction

The introduction should state your proposed topic, your research question and its significance. Provide any necessary background information or define any unusual terms or concepts. Finally, end the introduction with a *thesis statement for the proposal* which reflects the **purpose** for this proposal. This is NOT the same as your "working thesis" (which you have not yet determined).

### Rationale for the Study

To support the *thesis statement for the proposal* you must show that your research question fulfills at least **two** of the following criteria for a viable topic:

- It will remain interesting to you for the duration of the semester (e.g., it applies to your major, your personal interests, etc.);
- It addresses an unsettled dispute or an unsolved problem;
- It is focused and manageable;
- It has been researched by others, including at least one scholar;

You will write a claim which reflects each selected criterion and you will support it with specific and appropriate information from your experience, your reasoning, and published sources that are listed in the annotated bibliography (see below).

Aim to write at least two MEAL paragraphs which are **unified, developed** and **coherent**.

- **Unified:** Each claim supports the thesis and each piece of evidence supports the claim.
- **Developed:** Evidence is detailed and specific and refers directly to the sources in your Annotated Bibliography
- **Coherent:** Information is presented in a logical order.

### Request for Approval

Your proposal will close with a request for my approval of your topic. At this point you may want to reiterate its main "selling points."

### Annotated Bibliography

You will also create an Annotated Bibliography to show that you have conducted some preliminary research. At a minimum, you will find, read, summarize, assess, and reflect on at **least eight sources** relevant to your research question. **Four** of these **must be scholarly journal articles (a.k.a., "academic" or "peer reviewed")**. The others may be from newspapers, trade journals, government documents, magazines, or books. Please ASK you are not sure if source is "scholarly."

PLEASE NOTE: Your sources MUST be credible and appropriate to use for your final research paper. You will probably access most of your articles online through the library databases. Make sure that you know the difference between a scholarly article and an article from a non-scholarly periodical.

## Grading Criteria

This paper is worth 15% of your course grade.

Dimension	Criteria	Developing	Competent	Exemplary
Organization	Writer follows all Chicago formatting conventions	3	4	5
	Writer presents all appropriate sections (introduction, rationale, and request). The rationale section follows the "MEAL" method: each developmental paragraph demonstrates unity and coherence.	3	4	5
Content & Argument	Writer presents his/her research question and its significance with context and clarity.	7	10	15
	Writer presents an appropriate thesis for this proposal and supports it with at least two argumentative claims which reflect criteria for a suitable research topic.	7	10	15
	Writer provides detailed, relevant, and convincing evidence to support each claim. Writer integrates evidence from sources with skill and accuracy.	7	10	15
Annotated Bibliography	Writer lists a minimum of eight sources from a variety of sources: <i>at least</i> four are from a scholarly "peer reviewed" journal and all are credible.	3	4	5
	Writer summarizes each article in his/her own words with skill and accuracy; writer provides a reasonable assessment of the quality of the source and utility of each article for his/her purposes.	7	10	15
Style	Documentation: Writer provides accurate attributions and/or in-text citations for each piece of evidence from the sources. Bibliographic entries demonstrate mastery of Chicago style.	7	10	15
	ESWE: Writer uses Edited Standard Written English with precision and accuracy (grammar, spelling, and mechanics).	6	8	10

### Key to Categories:

- I. Exemplary: The writer demonstrates mastery in this area.
- II. Competent: The writer demonstrates satisfactory skill in this area.
- III. Developing: The draft needs revision, and/or the writer needs further instruction and practice.