Project #4: Argumentative Community Research Paper
WRA 135
Michigan State University

Learning Objectives (Purpose):

After doing this assignment, you should be able to:
- Use library resources to find relevant sources for a research paper
- Identify scholarly outside sources, such as journal articles, book chapters, and videos of scholars giving talks, and use them effectively in a research paper
- Demonstrate how library research can be beneficial to addressing issues pertinent to community partners
- Use community partners as local experts in a research paper
- Create an argument that is responsive to a scholarly conversation

Description (Situation):

This is an individual project, although you are encouraged to share resources with your fellow students.

The goals of this project are to do research on a culture-wide problem or trend that is pertinent to both yourself and your community partner, to evaluate various scholarly viewpoints on this culture-wide problem or trend as well as the viewpoint of your community partner on it, and to make a recommendation for how your community partner might use knowledge that you uncover during your research to respond to this trend/problem in the future.

a) During your next meeting with your community partner, you will present your project #3 draft to them and get feedback from them as to how to proceed with the project. While working on project #4, you're responsible for *collecting* any more stuff (i.e. video footage, photos, images, etc.) needed to complete your multimodal project by the end of the semester.

b) You will then ask them about possible topics (see list below) they might be interested in hearing about for project #4.

c) Given their interests, you will locate topics of mutual interest for individual group members to research for their projects.

d) You will then hit the library to locate specific viewpoints (at least three) regarding the cultural problem/trend you have chosen to research.

e) You will then individually interview your community partner about your topic in order to get their viewpoint on it.

f) You will then evaluate, within your essay, the various viewpoints (so at least 4 total, including the viewpoint of your community partner) you have collected regarding your topic.

g) Finally, you will argue for the validity of one viewpoint over others, or for a new viewpoint that should be adopted based on your research, and will conclude with specific recommendations for the way your community partner should respond to the problem/trend you've researched.

h) Lastly, you will prepare a short research summary (1-2 pages) in which you summarize your research findings and recommendations.

Possible Cultural Problems/Trends to Research:

- The Trends of Going Green, 100-mile Diets, and/or Buying Local and how they are affected by literacy/media (like news agencies, the web, etc.)
- The Challenges of Making Community Media or Doing Community Work/Volunteerism around Literacy/Media
- The Digital Divide (or national/global disparities among various groups regarding access to and facility with computers; i.e. race, gender, class, religion, ability status, occupation, etc.)
- Media Democracy/Media Consolidation

- The Serve America Act and its Relationship to Community Media/Community Literacy Work
- Using Technology for Teaching/Learning
- The Impact of Literacy/Media on Senior Citizens or Healthcare Patients
- How Literacy and Media Foster or Fail To Foster Active Citizenship
- How Literacy and Media Foster or Fail To Foster Service-Learning
- The Use of Literacy and Media in the Workplace or for Non-Profit Organizations
- The "Literacy Crisis" as it Relates to New Forms of Literacy (such as media literacy)
- Copyright/Authorship
- Media Representation of Groups from Various Social Backgrounds (i.e. race, gender, class, religion, ability status, occupation, etc.)
- The Decline of American Voluntarism and its Relationship to Media/Literacy
- Trends in Student Voluntarism/Service-Learning and their Relationship to Media/Literacy

Audience:

The primary audience for these papers will be your instructors (who will function as representatives of the academic community), but your peers will also function as another type of audience by helping to critique your essays and to articulate the conventions of academic writing that have been used throughout the class. Finally, your instructor will be assessing how effective your text is at using these conventions. In addition, your community partner will also function as an audience for your research summary you will prepare for them and for your paper (which they may want to read).

Texts to Draw Upon:

- Lessig, Lawrence, "Larry Lessig on laws that choke creativity (Online)
- What is CC? (Online)
- Any other text from this course
- Ballenger's *The Curious Researcher*
- Relevant scholarly sources such as journal articles, book chapters, and videos of scholars giving talks (5 required, 2 of which can be from the class itself, and community partner)
- Relevant community sources such as websites, brochures, videos, etc.

Texts You Must Produce for this Project (Mode):

1. *Individual:* 1-2 page IARD/MAPS cover letter
2. *Individual:* 1-2 page research summary, which should include:
   a) An introduction to/summary of the various viewpoints regarding your topic (the cultural problem/trend you researched)
   b) A summary of your evaluation of which viewpoint is most valid, based on your research/experience (or an articulation of a new viewpoint)
   c) A reflection on how you feel your community partner is currently responding to the cultural problem/trend you researched
   d) Specific recommendations for how your community partner might continue to respond/might respond differently to the trend/problem given your research
3. *Individual:* Final draft of your project, Minimum 4-6 pages, with *full* MLA conventions (see handbook for details)
4. *Individual:* First draft of your project
5. *Group:* A collection of all notes from meetings with your group and/or community partner

Project #4 Rough Draft Due: 11/24
Project #4 Final Draft Due Date: 12/1
*See the *Schedule for Project #4* for further information.