

## **Class Grant Assignment**

Information about the Persuasive Essay, Outline, and Class Presentation  
BSC101, Dr. Hunt  
Fall 2010

As a culminating project for the class, you will write a persuasive essay about an important social problem related to gender or sex. In the paper, you will identify a problem, present arguments for why it is important, discuss potential solutions for the problem, and present arguments for which solution is most effective. To add a real-world dimension to the assignment, each student will contribute \$5 (or more) to a class "grant fund." After turning in the persuasive essays, students will make a short oral presentation about their problem and proposed solution. *Whoever presents the most persuasive argument will receive the grant money to put their plan into action!*

### **Detailed Outline**

In order to help prepare for your essay and acquire additional feedback, you will turn in a detailed outline on either **November 12 or 15**. If you turn in your outline on the 12<sup>th</sup>, you will get feedback more quickly and therefore have more time to write your essay.

Your outline (and, ultimately, your paper) should include:

1. A clear statement of the position you are arguing – that something (your topic) is an important problem related to gender in some manner (be sure to specify how)
2. At least three arguments or examples in support of your position, with research supporting each one
3. Discussion of at least one potential solution for your problem, with relevant research and an explanation of why this solution is likely to be effective
4. Discussion of the implications and consequences of your problem and solution

Within your outline, be sure to define concepts, acknowledge assumptions, and otherwise address the elements of reasoning (see Chapter 2 in the FoI book).

A good outline not only states the topics that will be included, but it describes the specific information that will be discussed. For example, the following is a good example of the beginning of an outline for a persuasive essay that laws should protect gay and lesbian parents:

- I. Introduction (statement of problem)
  - A. Even though society has increased its acceptance of gays and lesbians, they still do not have the same relationship and parental rights as heterosexuals.

- a. People have negative reactions because they believe that gays and lesbians violate traditional gender roles and are unable to be good parents.
  - B. Over half of all U.S. states have laws banning gays and lesbians from getting married. Only a few states allow same-gender marriage or have civil unions (Herek, 2006).
  - C. However, a substantial percentage of gays and lesbians are in long-term relationships, and many raise children (Patterson, 2000).
    - a. 34% of lesbian couples and 22% of gay couples (U.S. Census, 2000)
  - D. Children can suffer because their parents don't have adequate legal rights.
  - E. Thesis: Gay and lesbian parents should have the same legal rights as heterosexual parents.
- II. Argument 1: Current laws do not provide adequate parental rights to gay and lesbian parents.
- A. In three states, gay and lesbian individuals are not allowed to adopt children (Urban Institute, 2007).
  - B. Many courts have denied gay or lesbian parents custody of children that were conceived in a heterosexual relationship (Falk, 1989).
  - C. Even if gay or lesbian couples have children, it can be difficult for both parents to have legal rights.
    - a. In many states, the only way that non-biological parents can adopt children is for biological parents to relinquish their rights.
    - b. States need to adopt second parent adoption laws to solve this problem (Perrin, 2002).

Remember, the more detail you include in your outline, the easier it will be identify any potential holes in your paper (also, I will be able to give you much better feedback). The time you put into writing a good outline pays off because it makes it much easier to write your actual paper.

*When you turn in your outline, please include your \$5 (or higher) contribution to our class "grant fund." The student with the most persuasive argument for a problem and solution will receive the money to as a way to begin working on the issue (see below).*

## **Final Essay**

Your final essay should be approximately 6-8 pages of double-spaced text with 10-12 point font and 1 inch margins. It also should have a separate title page and a list of references in either MLA or APA format. Thus, the entire paper will be approximately 8-11 pages long.

Using the skills you learned in the library assignment, you must include citations in the text for all of the information you provide. You are allowed to use a **maximum of two direct quotations** in the paper, and neither can exceed 25 words. All other information must be paraphrased. If there is any evidence of plagiarism, you will automatically receive a grade of zero, with no opportunity to redo the assignment. If you have any questions about paraphrasing or plagiarism, please see Dr. Hunt *before* you turn in the assignment.

The essay is worth 60 points. Points will be determined in the following manner:

Clear statement of your argument and how it relates to gender	5 points
1 <sup>st</sup> argument or example in support of your position – clearly described, logical, supported by research	6 points
2 <sup>nd</sup> argument or example in support of your position – clearly described, logical, supported by research	6 points
3 <sup>rd</sup> argument or example in support of your position – clearly described, logical, supported by research	6 points
Discussion of one or more potential solutions for your problem – clearly described with explanation of why it is effective and related research	6 points
Implications and consequences of your problem and solution	6 points
Quality of critical thinking – see SUNY criteria in <i>FoI</i> book; includes addressing the elements of reasoning (e.g., defining concepts)	10 points
Writing style – grammar, spelling, clarity	10 points
Proper paraphrasing, citations, and references	5 points

*Your persuasive essay is due on Tuesday, November 23* (one day extension from the syllabus); you will upload it into a TurnItIn dropbox on Angel like you did for the annotated bibliography.

### **Oral Presentations**

On November 29 and December 1 (extending into December 3 if needed), you will make a short oral presentation about your problem and proposed solution. Please plan on standing up in front of the class and talking for approximately 4 minutes. To make sure we get through all of the presentations, I will cut people off if they run long.

In your presentation, please state the problem you addressed in your paper and provide a brief overview of some of the evidence or examples that show it is an important problem. Then, describe your proposed solution and explain why it would work. Given the shortness of the presentations, you cannot use visual aids such as PowerPoint (but you may have notes).

At the end of the presentations, the class will vote on who made the most persuasive case for their problem and solution. *The winner will receive the grant money to put their plan into action!*

### **Final Comment**

If you have questions at any points during the process of outlining and writing your paper, please come see Dr. Hunt!