

SSP 203—Information About the Following Assignment:

As per the header, I can use this assignment in Com 102, a research writing class. I just switched texts again, so it's a bit new to me this semester—you'll notice that the first part of the "What" section loosely refers to readings from *Mercury Reader*, but, as usual, I'm not certain if I'll stay with said text next fall when teaching 102. Whichever text I go with will hopefully have a sustainability section (*Mercury Reader* does not have one, but there are in fact multiple essays examining ideas consistent with sustainability: "Water Incorporated: The Commodification of the World's Water") comprised of articles drawn from all kinds of different sources: newspapers, journals, magazines, etc. I've been using custom textbooks lately, so I could very well build an entire course around sustainability if there are enough pertinent texts available through the publishers.

I'll use the assignment to fulfill the required "research paper" component of Com 102 most likely during the Fall semester of 2015 or Spring 2016.

How does it relate to sustainability? It will require students to take a step back from the daily routines of their lives for a moment and objectively examine their surroundings, immediate and otherwise—it asks them to look at their local environment, how it got that way, and why it matters. This opens them up to all kinds of examinations of self: social justice, usage of resources, history, etc.

Learning Outcomes Covered:

Upon reviewing the list, I quit picking and choosing—we can hit them all:

• Critical Reading and Thinking

By the end of the term a student should be able to:

- Create connections among texts discussed and other texts.
- Analyze a writer's stylistic choices, such as the perspective or tone adopted for a particular audience and its purpose.

• Source-Based Writing

By the end of the term a student should be able to:

- Construct an argument based on a text or texts.
- Develop strategies for reaching more than one type of audience in a piece of writing.
- Select source material (library, print, digital, or fieldwork-based) appropriate to a writing project's purpose and audience.
- Integrate research material from multiple sources into a piece of writing while maintaining one's voice.
- Demonstrate ethical awareness in writing by incorporating and documenting source material responsibly according to a guidelines system (MLA, APA).
- Correctly document sources through appropriate in-text citations and a Works Cited page.
- Move beyond managing correctness in writing and toward making deliberate choices about stylistic elements such as clarity, concision, cohesion, and emphasis.
- Demonstrate skill at the stylistic aspects of integrating sources, such as employing a variety of transitional effects or integrating a quote into the grammatical structure of a sentence.

The Assignment:

Our Personal Choices: A Closer Look at How We Affect Our World

What:

- 1.) In light of the essays from *Mercury Reader* we've been reading and discussing over the past weeks, it's now time to take a closer look at the real world. So—let your thinking and research and writing about the following questions lead you to a topic for your final essay:

How are the personal choices you're making in regards to technology deeply affecting all of us both here and globally? If we know that such places as the ones showcased in the articles we've shared really do exist (and they do), can we truly continue making our choices in the name of convenience and ease of communication? Can short term conveniences truly be sustainable when the evidence is so readily displayed to the contrary, and what can we possibly do about it? How are our choices here in the Western world affecting other places in the world? If the wheels of our economic well-being are allowed to turn smoothly at the expense of other economies, can we truly continue making such choices? If

our insatiable desire for the next best technology rots a hole in the other side of the world, how long will it take to reach us in any of a number of ways? Are there any such places nearby? Where are they?

Why:

-This assignment will ultimately illustrate all that you've been learning about our course objectives and competencies—have a look in our syllabus under the “Critical Reading and Thinking” section, and then look at the “Source Based Writing” section. Part of this assignment will take the form of a written proposal, and I'll ask you to tell me therein how your writing is aligning with our course goals.

-Along the way, we will discuss the larger question, “why bother using sources in my writing?” In short, the academic world calls it “information literacy,” that is, can you find, evaluate, incorporate, and properly document research?

-You should become a bit of an expert on whatever it is that you choose to research—that is, you should come to an understanding of the content outside of your current understanding and comfort zone. Pay attention to yourself as you write and research; you may, if you do this right, learn quite a bit about yourself (communications skills, reception to new ideas, comfort w/ meeting new people, etc.).

How:

-You may organize this essay any way you see fit—the final decision on what you do and how you do it is up to you. If you have an idea you are unsure about, please be sure to contact me before you begin any major effort therein.

-Your topic will be inherently important to your life; choose to think, research, and write about something that truly affects you.

Requirements:

- 6 pages for the final draft.
- 1 page minimum skeleton draft (writing what you already know before getting into any kind of research)—this will be done in the writing lab.
- Incorporate information from interviews with at least two people involved in the situation you're writing about; in that your topics will vary widely, please clear said individuals with me ahead of time. You will conduct the interviews yourself, and one of them must be *in person*—

begin early; if you can't find interviewees, you will be required to change topics. Read pages 122-128 of our textbook for more information regarding interviews.

- You must provide copies of your notes / interviews with the paper.
- You must furnish proof of the in person interview (photograph, signature, phone number, etc.).
- Use sources as needed; that is, rather than quantifying the amount of sources from my end, you instead need to focus on where—and why—you ought to be substantiating your claims with outside information.
- Use proper MLA research and documentation skills, including a proper Work Cited page.
- Complete a self-evaluation form.

When:

-We will have a library orientation early next week to introduce you to some of the available research options, techniques, etc.

-We have a computer lab next week, room T.B.A., for invention, pre-writing, and preliminary research. We will discuss the interviewing process, including how to write good questions.

-Further, we will break down into workshop for a week and a half following our lab dates.

-Refer to the Course Calendar for specifics.

You will not have a chance to revise this 200 point essay—20% of the course total—once it has been turned in for a grade, so be sure to make the most of your time. If that includes using me as a resource, you should know how to find me by now.

Cheers.