Final Paper: research-based, thesis-driven, on any topic of your choice

*Reading and writing toward an extended essay with clarity and coherence*

5 to 7+ pages in MLA format with 3 to 5+ sources

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| *research skills* | *writing skills* |
| credible sources, mix of print, online, library db | sentence grammar and paragraph development,  clarity and coherence of the whole |
| recognition of key words, ideas in source material | clear thesis and supporting facts, examples, quotes |
| MLA format, including in-text citations and  annotated works cited | balance of fact and commentary |

*Write a free-standing, research-based, documented paper. Avoid vague generalizations or opinions without specific examples and quotations from sources.*

Potential topics:

Expand any topic covered in *NWR* or class discussions on the global environment:

effects of toxins—case study of lead-contaminated water in Flint, Michigan

climate change policy and guidelines—U.N. in Paris 2015, history of Copenhagen, Kyoto

garbage and solid waste disposal, *Behind the Beautiful Forevers* (book), *Waste Land* (movie)

endangered species—trophy hunting in Africa, poaching for black market, habitat destruction

energy resources—building efficiency, fuel efficiency, alternative fuels, recycling

consumer culture v. environmental cost—factory farms, single-use throwaways

water resources—California drought or agribusiness water consumption, *Watermark* (movie)

More topics:

Trump Administration to date—Jeff Sessions DOJ policy and practice re: deportation to Mexico, FBI and House Intelligence Committee Russia investigation, Betsy DeVos as Sec’y of Ed—tax credits and vouchers for K-12 private schools, EPA Scott Pruitt on climate change (carbon dioxide emissions) and environmental regulation of air and water quality, etc.

Wealth gap—tax reform, trends since 1970s, consumer debt industry (credit cards, bankruptcy, mortgage market), top one percent/top .5 percent, what this means for democracy.

Minimum wage—$10.10, 12.00, 15.00 per hr, universal or by location (cost of living)?

Legal age—driving, drinking, smoking, voting, military enlistment, consensual sex, marriage. At what age are adult activities appropriate? Should we establish a uniform age for adult legal standing?

Sports—is Fantasy Sports a form of online gambling? is it a level playing field? who profits? who loses? should it be regulated to protect the consumer?

College athletes—NCAA one-and-done rule; what are the conflicts of college sports and education? Who profits, who loses from network TV coverage of college sports?

NFL concussion controversy—long-term effects on players; influence on high school football.

Drones—rules of engagement, unmanned aircraft v. boots on the ground, civilian fatalities.

Refugees and migrants—Syria exodus, refugee camps as semi-permanent cities in the Middle East, Asia, and Africa.

U.S. immigration reform—amnesty for long-time residents, military service, path to citizenship, proposed Dream Act, anchor babies, ICE raids and detention centers.

China’s one-child policy change after 35 yrs, gender gap, labor pool, old v young, Mei Fong’s *One Child: The Story of China’s Most Radical Experiment*—to what extent, if any, should government dictate family planning?

Capital punishment—update on shortage of pharmaceuticals, delays, Innocence Project, DNA exonerations, Supreme Court outlook, cost to states and fed, ethical questions.

Mass incarceration—drugs sentencing laws, prison industrial complex, *The House I Live In* (documentary film), “The Black Family in the Age of Mass Incarceration” by Ta-Nehesi Coates.

Sex consent—California affirmative consent law for public colleges, yes/no before sex.

Abortion—Planned Parenthood and GOP proposed de-funding, Senate hearing of Cecile Richards, federal funding, public policy, Planned Parenthood role in public health.

Public bathroom policy—history of public bathrooms (sanitation after 18th c cholera epidemics), WCs (unisex) in Europe, unisex airplane bathrooms, transgender allowed bathrooms, NC case example, signage.

Family as a social unit—how has the traditional American family model changed over time? How has marriage changed as a social and economic institution? Divorce, same-sex marriage. Arranged marriage v. “love” marriage.

LGBTQ—re-defining gender as a social construction; binary v continuum of sexual orientation.

Graffiti—as art and political/social commentary, outsider POV, vandalism, marking territory.

Wild card—interested in music, sports, fashion, mass media, something else? See instructor on

how to construct a scholarly paper on popular culture, how to develop social criticism—for example,

Jeff Chang’s *Can’t Stop, Won’t Stop* on early hip-hop as social/political commentary, art as survival.

Checklist for final paper:

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| 1 Clarity. Subject, topic, thesis statement, case study or examples, quotes, infographics.  2 Coherence. Paragraph organization, transitions, explanation and analysis.  3 Research. Anchor source (in-depth book, film, or article), library db journal article(s).  4 Sentence grammar. Complex and compound sentences, grounded question(s).  5 MLA format. In-text (parenthetical) citations, annotated works cited, page format. |