

**21W.730 EXPOSITORY WRITING: SOCIAL AND ETHICAL ISSUES**  
**A. Walsh** **Fall 2005**

**ESSAY #2 SEQUENCE: INVESTIGATIVE ESSAY/COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS**

**Due Dates: Topic Description (one paragraph): Monday 10/3**

**Proposal: Wed. 10/12**

**Revised Proposal: Wed. 10/19**

**First Version: Fri. 10/28 (8-10 pg.) -with cover letter**

**Workshop: Mon. 10/31**

**Revision: Thurs. 11/10 (12 pg.)**

**Suggested length: 12 pg., typed, double-spaced, with bibliography and cover letter.**

**Please attach to revision the marked-up first version with my comments, the previous proposals and a revision cover letter.**

This essay is an investigative piece, which asks you to compare different perspectives on a contemporary social or ethical problem or issue. This assignment challenges you as a writer to work with and compare various perspectives and sources while discovering or maintaining your own views. We might think of “different perspectives” as different lenses through which to view a social or ethical problem. These lenses might be political (e.g., comparing different stances on the war on Iraq or on gun control), sociological (e.g., comparing different causal explanations for homelessness in the U.S. or another country), historical/cross-cultural (e.g., examining hunger or food scarcity issues in two different countries or historical eras) or cultural (e.g., analyzing different images of and perceptions of juvenile crime in the U.S.—or another country-- in the popular press or film and academic literature).

In your research for this essay, you should draw upon secondary sources such as books and journal articles. You also have the option of drawing upon your own (and others’) life experiences, service learning, as well as journalistic and other popular media sources (newspapers, magazines, television shows, films). For this assignment, you are asked to do a small “community research project”: visit at least one organization (e.g., social service, political or religious organization) that addresses this particular social or ethical problem, collect relevant pamphlets or literature and interview a staff member about the organization’s philosophy and approach to this issue. (Web research is an excellent way to begin your community research and, potentially, to find some relevant documents. However, you need to set up an interview as well. Guidelines to successful interviewing will be discussed in class.) Students doing service learning may want to interview staff members or administrators at their sites.

It is not a requirement to include documentary photographs in your essay, but it is an option. Students in service learning, however, should not use photographs showing clients at their service sites. If you decide to include documentary photographs, you might place them within the text of the essay or append them to the end of the piece. (Remember that if you include photos in the text, that you will need to increase your page count accordingly.)

The writing challenges of essay #2 are:

- \*prewriting: “mapping” your topic; figuring out various angles on the issue;
- \*drafting/revising: clearly and comparatively presenting different points of view, drawing upon secondary sources;
- \*drafting/revising: fairly presenting opinions differing from your own;
- \*drafting/revising: establishing an engaging style, maintaining your own voice

While crafting this essay, remember that your options as a writer include: siding with one perspective (while recognizing the power of another); adopting a stance that combines aspects of different perspectives or simply recognizing the value of the multiple viewpoints (or a debate) in deepening your readers’ understanding of the issue.

### **Pre-Essay Exercises**

**Mon. 10/3: Ex. 2.1: Topic Ideas (a paragraph or two). If you are considering a few different ideas, include them all! Bring THREE copies.**

**Wed. 10/12: Ex. 2.2: Topic Proposal: Write a 1-2 pg. typed proposal with a working bibliography of at least FIVE secondary sources. In the proposal, tell the reader (a) why you’ve chosen the topic and how you identify the different perspectives (b) why you feel the topic would be interesting for a wider audience and (c) some ideas for community research. Bring FIVE copies of the proposal.**

**Wed. 10/19: Ex. 2.3: Revised Proposal: Tighten and clarify your proposal, and add sources to the bibliography as needed. Include a specific plan for community research. Attach earlier proposal.**

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