Debate Essay, Paper #2

Length: 3-5 pages  
Value: 15% of course grade  
Format: MLA format, double-spaced, one-inch margins, 12-point font, Times New Roman  
Number of Sources Required: 4-6 credible sources  
Rough Draft Due: September 18th by midnight (minimum 2 pages)  
Final Draft Due: September 27th by midnight (minimum 3 pages)

Purpose:

In Paper #1, you summarized an argument while holding back your own opinion. In Papers #3-6, you will do research on a topic, and make your own argument. Thus, Paper #2 is a bridge between summary and the research paper.

In Paper #2, you will choose a debate, and research two sides of that debate. Using the chapters “The Doctors of the Death Chamber” and “Piecework” as loose models, you will summarize two sides of a debate, and then you will make your own argument. That is, you will write with a similar organization as Atul Gawande, explaining the debate and listening to both sides before giving your own position on the subject and supporting that position with evidence.

Choosing a topic:

All topics must be approved by me. You may choose a topic for this paper, but it must be related in some way to Gawande’s book Better or the medical field. Broad examples of debatable topics include:

- Physician-assisted suicide  
- Affordable health care/health insurance  
- Legalization of marijuana/use of medicinal marijuana  
- C-sections scheduled without medical reasons  
- Participation of physicians in state-mandated executions

When choosing a topic for this paper, you will want to choose a current debate that has reasonable and rational arguments on both sides. For example, if you choose a debate but cannot find any credible sources to support one side of that argument, then you will need to change topic.

Requirements for the assignment:

After you choose a topic, you will read a variety of sources (newspaper and magazine articles, or other essays/articles from credible sources). Select at least 2 sources for each side of the debate, and in the model of “The Doctors of the Death Chamber”:

- Explain the problem/conflict that created the debate  
- Summarize the arguments made in your sources  
- At the end of the paper, in one-three paragraphs, explain where you stand in the debate, and why, supporting your position with at least two pieces of evidence and analysis  
- Use very few quotes (about two per paragraph), paraphrase completely and accurately, and cite the page numbers for the ideas you summarize  
- Include a works cited page listing all of your sources in MLA format
Minimum Requirements of Paper #2:

- Meets the minimum page requirement, and it in correct MLA format
- All drafts are submitted on time
- Provides analytical summaries of at least four credible sources
- Summaries of sources clearly and accurately state the source’s overall argument, and the evidence that supports that argument
- Paper includes all needed citations and a complete works cited page
- Paper is in student’s own words, save for a few quotes used only as needed
- Introduction explains the terms of, and two sides of, a debate
- Paper includes the background information needed to explain the debate
- All paragraphs are unified and logically organized
- Paragraphs build upon each other rather than listing disjointed sub-claims
- Students clearly states his or her position (thesis) in the debate
- All student’s claims are supported with relevant evidence
- Supporting evidence is logical, credible, and objective
- Supporting evidence is analyzed, and the student explains how the evidence supports the student’s argument/sub-claim
- Final paragraph restates the overall argument, and discusses the possible future of the debate and the broader significance (the “so what”) of the debate.
- Paper includes a complete works cited page
- Paper is free of major grammatical, diction, and stylistic errors, and student has addressed the grammar problems from Paper #1 and Paper #2 Rough Draft

Each assignment will receive a letter grade (sometimes with a + or -) as follows:

A = writing is very clear, nearly free of errors, and is characterized by excellent adherence to the requirements. Summaries and argumentation are sophisticated and complex.

B = writing is pretty clear, contains only a few errors, and is characterized by very good adherence to the requirements. Summaries and argumentation are solid and coherent.

C = writing is somewhat clear, contains many errors, and is characterized by adequate adherence to the requirements. Summaries and argumentation are understandable.

D = writing is not clear and is characterized by poor adherence to the requirements, failure to follow the prompt, and many major grammar errors. Summaries and argumentation are unclear, and/or illogical, and/or incomplete.

F = writing is characterized by inadequate adherence to the requirements. The assignment may also have other deficiencies that indicate the assignment does not satisfy other requirements.

Remember that you must receive at least a “C” in this course to move on to the next writing level, so a grade below a “C” is effectively a failing grade and cause for concern.