

PAPER 2: MAPPING THE ISSUE

English 1302: Rhetoric and Composition II



THE RHETORICAL SITUATION

For your Issue Proposal, you organized your preexisting knowledge on your issue and sketched a plan for research. You then compiled several sources and summarized their contents for your Annotated Bibliography. For this paper, you will trace the history of your issue and map at least three different positions on it while maintaining your own neutrality.

Before people can make an informed decision on a controversial issue, they must know something about how the controversy has evolved over time and the range of current positions on the issue. To meet this need, major news organizations often inform their readers of public controversies by providing a neutral, unbiased description of an issue's history and the main arguments made on all sides, and academic organizations often map field-specific controversies in order to provide researchers with an overview of unsettled questions and unsolved problems.

Your audience for this paper will be readers of a (fictitious) online magazine for UTA students that offers analysis and commentary about politics, news, and culture. The content will consist of a map of the controversy surrounding your issue.

Paper 2: Mapping the Issue

READING, BRAINSTORMING, AND DRAFTING

- By this point you should have read several sources that provide background information on your issue and help explain how the controversy reached its current state. Draw from those sources to draft answers to the following questions:
 - What caused this issue to emerge in the first place?
 - What have been some of the major turning points in the history of the controversy?
 - Who is currently interested in the issue, and why?

You should generate at least a page of content in this section.

- You should also have read several sources that advocate a range of positions on your issue. Do some brainstorming to come up with a list of at least three distinct positions that reasonable people hold.
- For each position you've listed, draft a description of it by answering the following questions:
 - What are the main claims of people who advocate this position?
 - What reasons and evidence do advocates cite to support their claims?
 - What are the warrants or underlying assumptions of arguments that support this position?

If you describe at least three positions in sufficient detail, you should produce at least a page and a half of content here.

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- For each position you've described, choose a source that advocates for this position and summarize its specific argument.

If you summarize three sources in sufficient detail, you should generate at least a page and a half of content here.

- Take two of the positions you've described and draft a comparison of them that identifies areas of agreement and disagreement. Also, explain what causes their differences. For example, do they simply have competing interests? Do they focus on different aspects of the issue? Do they draw from different sources of evidence? Do they interpret the same evidence differently?

Then, compare the third position to the previous two, identifying its areas of agreement and disagreement with the first two positions and tracing the causes of its differences.

- You should produce at least a page of content in this section.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

As you prepare a draft that you'll share with readers, begin with an introduction (which need not be limited to a single paragraph) that accomplishes three goals:

- Acknowledges what "they say" (see Ch. 1)
- Provides an "I say" (see Ch. 4)
- Answers the "so what?" and "who cares?" questions (see Ch. 7)

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For this paper, the “they say” is not a view you’re agreeing with or disagreeing with. Rather, it’s simply the conversation surrounding the issue you’ve selected. Begin by summarizing that conversation.

Your “I say” will not be a conventional thesis statement because you’re remaining neutral rather than supporting a position. Instead, your “I say” will simply be a preview of what follows in the body of your paper.

The answer to the “who cares?” question is the UTA student body or at least a sizable portion of it. To answer the “so what?” question, explain to readers why your issue matters to stakeholders.

Once you have an introduction in place, feel free to arrange the content you’ve drafted in whatever way is most effective. One possible arrangement scheme is as follows:

- Introduction
- Background
- Description of first position
- Summary of first source
- Description of second position
- Summary of second source
- Comparison of first and second positions
- Description of third position
- Summary of third source
- Comparison of third position to first two

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CHOOSING AN APPROPRIATE STYLE

You're writing for publication and for a broad audience of readers you've never met, so your style should be more formal than in your Issue Proposal. At the same time, you're writing for a magazine, not a scholarly journal, so you don't have to write in stuffy, academic prose.

Make sure you construct coherent paragraphs that include topic sentences and supporting sentences that stay on topic.

The first time you reference a source, introduce it within the body of your text and, if possible, hyperlink to it. If you reference the source again later, just mention the author's last name. Make sure you enclose any quoted material in quotation marks. Don't use a formal system (e.g., MLA) for in-text citations because that is not the convention for most online magazines.

Although you are not using a formal system for in-text citations, you *do* have to submit a Works Cited page so that I can consult your sources.

You'll want to stick mostly to Standard English because this is the norm in publishing. Proofread carefully to ensure that your paper reads the way you want it to and that you've corrected unintentional errors. The Purdue OWL website (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>) is a terrific resource for information on standard writing conventions.

SPECS

Your paper should be no longer than six pages, double-spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman font, with one-inch margins all the way around.

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Your first submission is due at the beginning of class on _____, and you should think of it as a final draft—something you would be willing to submit for a grade. If your first submission does not address everything listed in this assignment sheet, I will return it to you and count it as late. Both your first and final submissions must be turned in on time; you will be docked a full letter grade for each day either is late.

Peer reviews are due _____.

Final drafts are due _____.

HOLISTIC GRADING CRITERIA FOR THE MAPPING THE ISSUE PAPER

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GRADING CRITERIA: C

The UTA Catalog defines a C as “fair,” which means *average*. Since this is a 1000-level Common Core class, a C paper is what a UTA freshman who is writing at an average level typically produces when they give a strong effort.

To earn a C, your Mapping paper should first indicate the larger conversation to which you’re responding (“they say”) before previewing the body of your paper (“I say”). You should answer the “so what?” and “who cares?” questions, provide background information on your issue, describe three different positions on your issue, summarize a source that advocates for each position, and analyze similarities and differences among the three positions. Show that you have responded actively and thoughtfully to peer and instructor feedback on your first submission. The style of your paper should not impede my understanding of your paper.

GRADING CRITERIA: B

The UTA Catalog defines a B as “good,” which means *above average*. A B paper is what a UTA freshman who is writing at an above-average level typically earns when they give a strong

Holistic Grading Criteria for the Mapping the Issue Paper

effort (certainly a student writing at an average level can earn a B with exceptional effort).

To earn a B, first make sure your paper meets all the criteria required to earn a C. Beyond that, you should represent what “they say” more completely and provide more developed answers to the “so what?” and “who cares?” questions by making a compelling case that your issue is significant to stakeholders. You should tell a coherent story of how the issue emerged, how it has evolved over time, and who is currently concerned with it. You should describe each position in a high level of detail, summarize sources fully and accurately, and provide a complex, easy-to-follow comparison of the positions. You should revise thoroughly, responding to feedback with great comprehensiveness. Finally, a B paper demonstrates strong command of word choice, voice, style, and grammatical conventions.

GRADING CRITERIA: A

The UTA Catalog defines an A as “excellent,” so an A paper is what a UTA freshman who is writing at an excellent level (80th percentile or above) might produce if they gave maximum effort. (Again, students writing at an average or above-average level may also earn As with extraordinary effort and sustained hard work.)

To earn an A, first make sure your paper meets the criteria required to earn a C and a B. You should answer the “so what?” and “who cares?” questions in great depth and with keen insight into the significance of your issue. Your background section should trace the evolution of the issue in rich detail and in a way that fully contextualizes its current status. You should describe positions fully and fairly, clearly identifying their

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typical argumentative elements. Your summaries of sources should demonstrate how each source exemplifies rhetorical maneuvers typical of that position. You should pinpoint similarities and differences among positions with great precision and in a way that captures the complexities of their relationships. At no point in your paper should it be apparent which position you favor. Finally, your paper should be lucid, concise, and easy to follow; it should also demonstrate your command of style, voice, mechanics, and usage.

GRADING CRITERIA: D OR F

If you receive a D on your paper, carefully consider the criteria listed above for a C. I give Ds to papers when writers, while demonstrating a general understanding of the topic and concepts, have not fulfilled all the requirements listed on the assignment sheet or have failed to respond to all my comments on their first submission. If you misunderstand the assignment; show little understanding of the required rhetorical concepts; or ignore the technical requirements of topic, length, or format, your paper may receive an F.