

Writing 2130 (Intersession)

Assignment 2: Multi-component Research Project (Research Poster and Research Essay)

Scenario and Description

Write a 1250-1500 word (5-6 page) researched, scholarly essay on some aspect of the Engineering/technology issue you chose for your Assignment 1 topic.

In a research essay, **you are expected to develop some sort of argument about your topic**. Thus, your focus should be on further investigating existing knowledge about whatever topic you choose, then organizing that knowledge into a concise and coherent paper reflecting a particular position or perspective on some aspect of that topic—a paper that makes and supports **a claim** (which you will articulate at or near the end of your introduction in a clear, specific **thesis statement**). Research essays are both informative—that is, they provide the reader with information about the topic—and persuasive, since they make some argument on the basis of evidence that you provide (your research). **That research must be cited and documented using correct IEEE style.**

Since you are writing in an academic genre here, you will be required to draw upon a variety of scholarly source materials throughout (ie: scholarly books, essays/articles from edited scholarly works or from reference works, print or online journal articles from subscription databases accessed via Western Libraries). For a reminder of how to search for, evaluate the merits of, and distinguish between types of sources, please review the relevant lessons in the library research skills module linked on our lecture section OWL site (under “Research Guides”). Your final essay will be required to cite and document at least 5 sources, the majority of which need to be scholarly.

Note that writing and submitting your essay will represent the final step in a larger, two-step project here, however. The preceding step is outlined below.

Step 1: Research Poster

The penultimate component of the research project is a digital research (or work display) poster that should be formatted to a size **no bigger than 32” x 48.”** The poster needs to provide a clear and succinct account of your research as it enters its final stage.

It should take the readers through a logical path—what your *Engineering Communication* authors call an effectively “reading trajectory”—that allows them to understand the key details of your topic and what you are arguing (as well as how, in terms of supporting evidence). Your poster needs to strike a balance between text and images, and it needs to be clean, well-organized, and eye-catching. As the textbook notes, an effective research

poster “is designed so that a viewer, on their own, can quickly make their way through the information and grasp its significance.”

In thinking about visual arrangement, review the chapter 8 section on posters (p. 275-9), particularly the part concerning the “Basic Principles of Poster Composition,” in conjunction with the lecture material concerning visual rhetoric and research poster expectations. Give very careful thought to questions of structure—layout and orientation—and try to determine how best to distil, represent, and organize your information to make the reader’s process of information retrieval as efficient and accurate as possible.

As with the essay that will follow from your poster, you must cite and document (again, in IEEE format, which entails using a numerical “References” list) any and all instances in which you draw directly on your research sources.

In total, this Research Assignment is worth **55% of your final grade**. Each component is due on the date listed on the syllabus, and the grading breakdown by component is as follows:

Research Poster= 25%

Research Essay= 30%