**Paper 1: Exigent Inquiry**

Due: 2/5 (draft), 2/8 (1st revision + revision reflection), 2/22 (2nd revision + revision reflection)

Length and formatting: 1200-1500 words, or 4-5 double-spaced pages. (Page count is approximate; prioritize word count over page count.) 12-point Times New Roman font, 1” margins on all sides, no extra spaces between paragraphs.

* The goal of this paper is to define and defend a **research question** about your chosen topic. What do you want to learn about your chosen topic? What issue do you want eventually to take a position about? The question should fulfill the elements of exigence: timeliness, audience-specific significance, and debatability. You may—and probably will—change the parameters of your research as the semester goes on, but this assignment will help you get started.
* To effectively define and defend your research question, you should argue for why your research question is worthwhile and important to pursue. This will involve contextualizing the larger issue at stake, defining your specific question, exploring why the question is difficult to answer, and considering what steps you plan to take toward answering it. **Do not take an argumentative position about your topic in this essay. Instead, argue for why your research question is worthwhile.**
* You can organize this paper in multiple ways. You are welcome to follow the structure of a conventional essay, in which you state your thesis question at the end of your introduction, spend your body elaborating on your question, and turn toward avenues for future research in your conclusion.
* You are not required to do outside research for this essay; I encourage you to analyze your own experiences and previous knowledge in relation to your chosen topic. If you would like to use outside research, please see me.
* Your audience for this essay is members of this class, and your purpose is to raise their awareness of your specific issue.

*This assignment fulfills learning outcomes 2 (pursue a focused research question) and 5 (understand writing as process)*.

Grading Criteria:

* An **A** paper is excellent. It articulates a clear purpose in relation to a specific audience that it accomplishes with skill and originality. It presents complex ideas clearly in a cogent train of thought. It carefully caters to the knowledge and concerns of its chosen audience. It is written in a clear and engaging style.

An **A Exigent Inquiry** essay compellingly connects personal experience and/or knowledge to a larger issue, using a style and organization that would engage a first-year college student. It follows a coherent train of thought to memorably define and defend an original research question about to a contemporary, debatable issue of audience-specific significance. It approaches its topic from an original angle, vividly portrays the issue’s complexity, and raises questions that are promising for future research.

* A **B** paper is good. It articulates a clear purpose in relation to a specific audience that it accomplishes with a high degree of competence. It presents coherent ideas clearly in a reasonable train of thought. It caters to the knowledge and concerns of its chosen audience. It is written in a clear style.

A **B Exigent Inquiry** essay effectively connects personal experience and/or knowledge to a larger issue, using a style and organization that would interest a first-year college student. It follows a coherent train of thought to clearly define a research question about a contemporary issue of some significance. It approaches its topic from a well-defined angle, conveys the difficulty of answering the research question, and raises questions that lend themselves to future research.

* A **C** paper is satisfactory. It articulates a purpose with suboptimal clarity in relation to a possibly vague audience that it accomplishes decently. It presents coherent ideas with suboptimal/passable cogency in a mostly reasonable train of thought. It has lapses in catering to/sometimes caters to the knowledge and concerns of its chosen audience. It is written in a style that is not consistently clear. It adheres to the conventions of standard written English with some errors.

A **C Exigent Inquiry** essay adequately connects personal experience and/or knowledge to a larger issue, using a style and organization that would be readable by first-year college student. Its train of thought is effective at illustrating the issue in question. It requires some effort to follow as it defines its issue vaguely or does not convincingly establish the issue’s exigence. It approaches its topic from an unoriginal angle and/or raises questions that could use some refinement before they would be a strong basis for future research.

* A **D** paper is unsatisfactory. Its purpose is not sufficiently clear, the audience is not well-defined, and/or the purpose is not adequately accomplished. It presents vague or poorly-argue ideas through a problematically ordered progression. It does little or nothing to cater to the knowledge and concerns of its chosen audience. It is written in a confusing or inappropriate style. It does not consistently adhere to the conventions of standard written English.

A **D Exigent Inquiry** essay inadequately connects personal experience and/or knowledge to a larger issue, using a style and organization that would alienate a first-year college student. Its train of thought is ineffective at illustrating the issue in question. It is muddled, and the issue in question is either not current, not debatable, or not significant. It approaches its topic from an unoriginal or confused angle and raises questions that do not lend themselves well to future research.

* An **F** paper fails. It does not fulfill the assignment. It does something other than is appropriate for its situation, or contains major and pervasive problems in terms of content, presentation, or writing style/mechanics that interfere with meaning.

An **F Exigent Inquiry** essay fails to connect a personal experience to a larger issue. Its style and organization are hostile or incomprehensible to a first-year college student. Its train of thought does not illustrate the issue in question. Its ideas are muddled or absent, and the issue in question is not current, debatable, or significant. It fails to ask relevant questions and may take an argumentative stance.