

Assignment Description and Purpose

Unessay Project - Description and Rubrics

Unessay Proposal <i>Due by 1:50pm on Mar. 20</i>	40 points
Unessay and Accompanying Statement <i>Due by 1:50pm on Apr. 22</i>	60 points
Final event: Unessays in Dialogue + Collaborative Reflection <i>Event held during class time on Apr. 24; reflection to be submitted by 1:50pm on Apr. 24</i>	20 points

The Grand Challenge seminars are meant to help you explore a complex, real-world problem through two (or more) disciplinary perspectives, as well as support you in critical thinking and communication around that problem. The final project for this class, which is an unessay, is designed to help you achieve these learning outcomes.

An unessay can be anything – except a traditional academic essay. You will propose your own topic relating to our Grand Challenge (i.e., equity in higher ed) and present it any way you choose. We are open to discussing any project format you can dream up and encourage you to approach this project with your imagination first.

With this project, we are looking for creativity, topical relevance to course materials, disciplinary perspectives, critical thinking, and effective communication skills. Potential formats could include:

- Analytical formats
 - a proposal for a nonprofit addressing educational inequity
 - a poster about a course topic (along the lines of an academic talk)
 - an explainer video
 - a set of op-eds about a course topic
- Creative formats
 - an art project (of any variety: painting, collage, cross-stitch, comic strip, zine)
 - a board or tabletop game
 - a meme collection
 - a concept map (educational equity across the U.S.)
 - a timeline of relevant events

Resources:

- Video equipment in the library (though your phone is also a good option)
- Free software available to you as a CMU student:
<https://www.cmu.edu/computing/software/access.html>
- CMU's library zine cart (more information available [here](#))

We realize that such an open-ended assignment might be intimidating and overwhelming. We have chosen it because it will allow you to engage with course ideas in a manner of your choosing. A standard paper is an excellent communication tool between and among academics in a particular field – but does not always allow for the flexibility that the unessay format provides.

Final Deliverables Overview

Deliverable	Description	Assessment Info/Due Date
Unessay Proposal	The unessay proposal should be 500-1000 words, detailing your chosen topic and medium + how you will present your work. Together with your unessay proposal, you will submit an annotated version of the final project rubric with comments on how it applies to your project.	March 20th
Unessay and Accompanying Statement	Along with your unessay, you will also submit an accompanying statement explaining the connections between your project and our course. The statement should include a variety of course materials and address both a historical lens discussed in class (e.g., change over time, dates, context) and a linguistics lens discussed in class (e.g. language in use, connotations, deficit vs asset-based). The statement should reference at least 3 course materials and reflect on the limitations and opportunities posed by your chosen medium of communication. The statement should be 750-1250 words, and include footnote citations (rather than in-text parenthetical citations). You may	April 22nd

	<p>either do complete footnotes and skip the reference list, or do short footnotes, (Author, "Title," page number) and a reference list. Citations must include the author, title, publication source, and publication date.</p> <p>See examples - (Denial) here and (Kissel) here</p>	
Unessays in Dialog and Collaborative Reflection	<p>During our April 24 class meeting, you will participate in a final event that puts your unessay in conversation with other projects. In small groups, you will take turns sharing your unessay. More specific instructions about these presentations will be given in-class, but you will be expected to review your group members' unessays before class.</p> <p>After each of you have presented your unessay, you will complete a collaborative reflection assignment.</p>	April 24th

S25 Unessay Final Project Rubric

	A	B	C	D/R
Statement 35%	The statement is clearly worded and direct; it explains convincing and nuanced connections between the project and course material.	The statement is relatively clear and explains basic connections between the project and course material.	The statement offers vague connections between course material and the project.	The statement does not meaningfully explain the project or address key questions.
Course material engagement 35%	This project shows critical and active engagement with the course material and chosen topic.	This project shows meaningful and relatively clear engagement with course material and chosen topic.	This project demonstrates only limited engagement with the course material	The project does not engage with course material.
Medium/ structure 15%	The chosen medium for the project works persuasively with the material covered; the project's structure is intentional and clear.	The chosen medium and structure of the project work, but could be more clear or impactful	The chosen medium and structure doesn't make sense for the project	The project's medium and structure lack focus, clarity, and purpose
Polish/ Finish 10%	The project is well-designed and executed with care.	The project is clearly designed and executed neatly.	The project appears sloppy or thrown together at the last minute	The project is disorganized, unpolished, and reflects little effort

