**English 1130.004 /008 – Douglas College – Winter 2017**

**Proposal Assignment**

**Due: In class March 16, 2017**

**Length: 300 words, maximum**

**Explanation:** A research proposal is the presentation of an idea that you wish to pursue. A good research proposal presumes that you have already thought about your project and have devoted some time and effort in gathering information, reading, and then organizing your thoughts. A research proposal is not simply an outline of your paper thrown together in one night with ideas that came about off the top of your head. One might say that the research proposal is a second step, following the selection of a broad topic—something I have already done for you.

**Task:** The main work of the proposal is finding and stating the analytical question you will address in your paper / project. An analytical question can take different forms and no one form is necessarily better than others. What all analytical questions have in common is the fact that they are not merely descriptive. An analytical question moves beyond the “what” and explores the “how,” and the “why.” A good analytical research paper will use the "what" as part of the answer to the “why.” However, the proposal must address a question to the subject beyond “what is it?” For example, a pedagogical proposal, lacking an analytical question will ask: “What were Gorbachev’s economic perestroika policies?” However, an analytical paper asks: “Why did Gorbachev's economic perestroika policies fail?” As part of the paper / analysis, you would need to review what the specific policies were, but once you did this, then you would go beyond that and into your opinion about their failure.

**The research proposal must have:**

1. Statement of the question your paper will answer. Again, remember, the point of your paper is to apply knowledge through argumentation and persuasion—not to teach the reader about something.
2. A thesis statement detailing your argument / exploration.
3. A brief outline detailing the different sections of your paper and how they will develop the topic / argument.
4. A short working bibliography of no less than three sources—I realize this will be tenuous for some. These sources can—and should—change.

**Other Instructions:**

1. The proposal need not be long, but the quality should be high. 1-2 pages would be more than sufficient. As a general rule, the more effort you put into your proposal the better your paper will be. Also, the more detailed your proposal, the more I can comment and usefully guide you to a good paper.
2. The proposal should follow a standard style format (MLA, APA) and include the appropriate cover page, bibliography, and other items, as needed.

**Remember:** You must hand in the proposal in order to hand in your final essay. Final essays that do not have a proposal preceding them will be returned unmarked and a grade of F/0% will be entered for the assignment. **There is no flexibility.**