Essay 4 - Evaluating Controversies Unit (20% or 200 points)

Rough Draft due: **Monday, Nov. 19th, 2018**, 2 to 3 pages due in class, hard copy.

OR if you will be absent this day, rough draft is due in Brightspace Dropbox, Mon. Nov. 19th at 11:59pm.

Final Draft due: **Saturday, Dec. 8th, 2018**, 5 to 7 pages in Brightspace Dropbox at 11:59pm.

**Prompt:**

For this essay you will describe and evaluate three websites constructed around a similar topic in order to develop an answer to the following questions below:

- What are these websites’ positive aspects and their limitations? What is especially credible and why?

Your audience will depend on your judgement of the websites to give a thoughtful argument so that they understand how they should view these websites. Your audience comes from varied backgrounds and can have different, and strong, opinions, so you want to be as persuasive as possible in your writing. You will evaluate your websites using the C.R.A.P. criteria and you will construct an argument using those sources.

**Outcomes:**

Students will be able to:

- Analyze a range of sources and evaluate for credibility, angle, scope, authoritativeness.
- Explain a range of research approaches and to access according to rhetorical contexts.
- Construct an argument with thorough and nuanced support that acknowledges the concerns of the audience and synthesizes sources appropriately.
- Develop a nuanced and thoughtful conclusion based on their evaluation of relevant sources.
- Support their conclusion with ample and appropriate evidence.

**Requirements:**

- 12-point Times New Roman font, Double-Spaced MLA format. (See Purdue Owl for help: [https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/]).
- Three to four sources over one issue, event, or controversy.

**Key Terms:**

- CRAP Source Evaluation, Balanced and Fair Assessment, Criteria (Grammar note: criteria are plural. The singular is criterion)
Definitions:

- CRAP Source Evaluation: Currency, reliability, authority, purpose/point of view
- An evaluation in an academic setting should be developed after constructing criteria, rather than attempting to develop reasons for an already decided judgment.
- Students will be making cognitive moves important to writing a thesis-driven evaluation. Balanced and fair assessment, based on the criteria, allows nuance or shades-of-gray argument strategies.
- Few evaluations, especially in scholarly work, should or can be without nuance. For example, a movie may have spectacular visuals but a tired and clichéd plot. A thoughtful movie critic will craft an evaluation that takes note of this disparity and makes an argument in which their preferred criterion weights the evaluation in one direction or another.

Grading Criteria:

- Knowledge of Sources through Close Reading and Use of Criteria (75 points): Through doing a close reading of your sources you will be able to acknowledge the author's keywords, bias or opinion, and purpose which will lead you to understanding the sources as a whole. In order to do so, you will have to use the C.R.A.P. criteria when evaluating. Through this your essay will convey an understanding of the sources.
- Evidence/Support/Sources (50 points): Your essay must have a thesis that is supported by your three to four sources. Your criteria must be an important part of your evaluation therefore using your own claim support through these sources. Make sure that you are answering your inquiry question.
- Organization of Essay (35 points): Your essay should have organized ideas that follow a clear and concise structure. Using transitions, topic sentences, an introduction with a thesis that your audience will be able to follow all the way through till your conclusion.
- Word Choice/Language (25 points): Appropriate tone and attention to audience. Always ask yourself, who is my audience? How can I use my tone/language to successfully convey my information or persuade my audience?
- Grammar, Mechanics, & Proofreading (15 points): I do not expect essays to be perfect but double check that there are no errors in your essay. There are many resources available to help with grammar and misspelled words (spellcheck, your peers during peer review, etc.). Please use them to the best of your ability in order to create a polished final piece. See me if there is anything in particular you would like to focus on as far as grammar/mechanics as well as in the essay overall.
Your websites should all be built for the purpose of your selected topic. For example, if your topic is vaccines, you need three websites focusing on vaccines. A general health website with an article on vaccines will not work as your comparison won't be symmetrical.

**Possible Starting Points:**

- Three vloggers who focus on video gaming
- Three fan fiction sites
- Three social media sites
- Three sites for sports fans, e.g. Deadspin, SB Nation, The Undefeated
- Three Star Wars fan sites
- Three Food Bloggers
- Three YouTube channels on a similar theme
- Three websites on bullying
- Three websites on vaccines
- Three websites on autism/neurodiversity
- Three websites on how to lose weight
- Three websites on GMOs (genetically modified organisms)
- Three major media news outlets, e.g. CNN, Fox, BBC.
- Three websites on hate crimes
- Three websites on UFOs.