Taking a Position

Purpose:

This semester we have thought about places and analyzed their rhetorical representations, and discussed how we understand places as a result of these depictions. Now we'll turn our attention to crafting arguments about place in order to participate in an ongoing public discourse with our own persuasive essays.

Prompt:

Argue a position about an issue in regards to its impact of a specific place. Make a claim that reveals your position, and back up your claim using evidence that incorporates a minimum of **three** sources. Use a third-person point of view in your paper.

Assignment Objectives

This writing assignment directs you to study an issue as a *critical thinker* in order to create your own argument on the issue; you, therefore, will:

- *analyze* opposing positions;
- *evaluate* the merits of those competing positions;
- *synthesize* their conclusions in order to assert *your own* position and develop an argument that will compel readers to consider seriously, if not accept, your position.

Instructions:

a. Brainstorm:

Think of the places where you spend the most of your time now or have spent a lot of time in the past. You might choose your hometown or city, your school, recreation center, place of worship, place of work, etc. Think about the communities that use these places, and what issues that might impact the people who use these places. These might include the environment, preservation, renovation, recreation. Are there any unmet needs regarding these communities? Topics might include employment, homelessness, bullying, litter/defacement of property, or a need for an after school program. Maybe officials of a place need to be accountable.

For instance, if I were writing this paper about Detroit, I might argue:

- The city needs a food co/op.
- The city needs more arts programs in the schools.
- The homeless shelter needs more support and employment programs.
- Water should remain public, and never be privatized.
- We need to address the problem of lead.
- Detroit is an example of police reform that the rest of the country should follow.
- We need better public transportation.
- The city needs to plan how to do road construction better.
- The city needs to address the sewerage smell problem.
- There needs to be a program that encourages adoption.

b. Choose what argument you will want to make?

- To bring attention to a problem.
- To find common ground.
- To change someone's behavior.

c. Gather sources (**minimum** of three):

- One source should provide context.
- One source should give a counter argument/opposing viewpoint for you to refute.
- One should help you back up one of your points.

d. Write a proposal that states a claim and an annotated bibliography that includes a paragraph summary of each source (four sentence minimum).

e. Craft a 4-6 page argument using your sources. Cite all of them in the paper and include a works cited page (a new page from your essay).

f. Peer review your paper in class

g. Submit your paper

Grading Criteria:
Thesis/Organization: 25%

- clear claim/thesis, or assert a clear and specific claim (one's position on the issue) early in the essay—usually the last sentence of the introduction
- smooth transitions between paragraphs
- present substantive and specific evidence in support of the claim (affirmation)

Variation of Appeals/Persuasive Tactics: 25%

- depends on the third-person point of view
- uses appropriate tactics/terms/information to persuade a specific audience.
- maintain a respectful tone in addressing opposing viewpoints

Incorporating Sources, Representing, and Analyzing Opposing Viewpoints: 25%

- considers and discusses the rhetorical situation
- introduces and assesses each source with context from the summary
- analyze the flaws in the evidence for the opposing argument in order to reveal its weaknesses (refutation)
- acknowledge some validity in the opposing argument (concession)

MLA Format/Grammar/Punctuation: 25%

- Includes in-text citations
- Includes Works Cited Page
- Proofread for typos, grammar, and punctuation errors.