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WRT 105: Practices of Academic Writing

November 13, 2014

Word Count: 880

**The Unit 3 Long(er) Essay**

When I ask people "What's wrong with having a conversation?" People say, "I'll tell you what's wrong with having a conversation. It takes place in real time and you can't control what you're going to say."So that's the bottom line. Texting, email, posting, ***all of these things let us present the self as we want to be***. We get to edit, and that means we get to delete, and that means we get to retouch, the face, the voice, the flesh, the body -- not too little, not too much, just right. *[Emphasis added]*

Sherry Turkle, “Connected, but alone?” TED Talk February, 2012

**Due:** Thursday, December 4th @ the start of class; post to your blog site on its own page.

**How:** ~ 7 -8 page (~1600 - 1650 word) essay, double spaced, with 1.5 inch margins all around. Staple the essay, and provide the standard assignment information (your name, course name, date, and word count): place this information (single-spaced) in the upper left corner of your title page (see above).

***Give your essay a meaningful title (especially if you have yet to do so) that conveys some aspect of what the paper argues.***

We will likely use a manila folder process for the hard copy details. With your polished hard copy, include the info sheets and stapled pages from your two (2)library research exercises.

**What:** A final ~ 7 -8 page essay (~1600 word) essay that develops and argues an original thesis about some aspect of our digital everyday lives.

Your essay should ***argue and develop an original thesis*** that touches on how some aspect of digital technology affects and impacts our everyday lives. That impact may include any way that digital technology structures, mediates, conducts, establishes, and infects the activities that comprise everyday life for us in the 21st century.

This digital impact may pertain to issues of automation of everyday activities; or to the degree to which social media shape our relationships; or to the idea that we’ve all become web-idiots, content to let the internet do our (heavy) thinking; or to the insidious fear that using digital technology affects the ways we think and process information; or to the idea that our youth become too digitally literate too early, often at the expense of the learning that comes with analog play and analog toys; or to the idea that we live in an era of distraction, constantly seeking some form of digital entertainment; or to the idea that we have multiple selves, spread across different platforms and devices, making for a curious type of dissociative identity disorder; or to idea that our notion of “community” must always already involve some sort of digital screen; or to the idea that we have, literally, lost the ability to be alone and solitary and bored … unless we are able to check our various e-status(es) and feeds and timelines by way of a Smartphone—the possibilities are endless, ***but the gist is that your thesis will present an argument about one small slice of all that digital cross-connection with the everyday***.

**Sources**

Your essay must cite at least two (2), but no more than five (5), outside sources, one (1) of which must be a scholarly source that you find through library research. We will be using MLA format for in-text citations and an MLA format “Works Cited & Consulted” list .

The “Works Cited & Consulted” list will include the sources you cite within the essay, the remaining library sources from your research exercises, and any of the general sources that we read for this unit and which bear upon your particular thesis topic.

**Things to Consider as You Compose**

* **Thesis and Paragraph Level Issues** – is the thesis argument / thesis cluster strong and specific; does it convey a sense of consequence and significance to/for the reader; do subsequent paragraphs convey / further the essay’s larger argument? Does the cluster pass our “So what?” test?
* **Clarity and Context Concerns** – does the essay maintain clarity of argument and reasoning *throughout* the draft; does each paragraph establish a context for the reader that explains the paragraph topic and its connection /relevance to the larger thesis argument?

* **Source Integration, Accuracy, and Use** – does the essay use quotations ***to support its*** argumentative claims, rather than quote exclusively as a way to repeat / retell a source’s thoughts and ideas; are the quotations explicitly, and logically connected to the paragraph thesis claim; does the quote remain faithful to its use in the original source; does the ¶ provide an adequate context to both explain the quote and its connection to the thesis argument?
* **Counterargument** ¶-- does the essay include a ¶ within which the essay addresses potential audience objections to my main thesis claim; does this ¶ unpack some of those objections in a fair manner, note their strengths, but ultimately explain how the thesis argument answers those objections?
* **Conclusion** – does the conclusion build upon the claims the essay makes; does conclusion point outward to the implications those claims evoke; does the conclusion ¶ point to the “next steps,” other irelated ideas or actions to be taken when moving forward?