

FYE Roundtables and Documented Essays

To be successful as scholars, professionals, and citizens, you will need to be able to research an issue effectively, draw sound conclusions, collaborate with others to explain and persuade, and participate in community discussions about important issues. This assignment is designed to help you learn and practice these skills.

Abstract

In pairs, write a shared abstract about what your pair or panel will present at the FYE Roundtable. This abstract should serve as a sort of advertisement for what you will discuss, giving others an idea of what to expect. The FYE Coordinator will use these to group pairs across all the sections into common subjects; then your peers and the FYE faculty member assigned to your session will use the abstracts to prepare for your presentation.

Begin by summarizing your argument, indicating why the issue is interesting and useful and worth others' attention. That probably means clearly articulating your thesis statement as well as the main points you will make to support that claim. The Writing Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill provides some helpful guidance at <http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/abstracts.html>.

In your abstract, you must include the following:

1. Title of your presentation.
2. Names of presenters with email addresses.
3. Professor's name.
4. A 200-word summary of the presentation or panel: the abstract itself.
5. If applicable, a list of any conference dates (December 2, 3, 6, 8) when your pair *cannot* present because of some school-authorized activity.
6. Submit these electronically to me via email but *also* on the FYE Roundtable website by the unalterable deadline of 5 pm Wednesday, November 10.

Your abstract will receive a grade, but submitting an abstract is also necessary to pass the course. That is, if you do not submit an abstract to the FYE Roundtable website by the deadline, you cannot present in the conference, and presenting in the conference is required in order to pass the course.

Research Presentation

Starting Friday, November 12, each pair in our class will practice your FYE Roundtable presentation in our class. This will be graded, and everyone must arrive that Wednesday morning ready to go: we will draw each morning for the presentation order. If you know that you cannot attend one of those class sessions (Thursday during the convocation hour is required) because of a school-authorized activity, tell me as soon as possible.

Your grade will reflect the following:

1. Your individual presentation.
 - How well do you organize your part of the presentation? How clear is your thesis statement? How clear are your transitions between ideas?
 - How persuasive and broad is your evidence? Is it clearly integrated into your argument? How well have you responded to possible objections?
 - How well have you cited the material you reference?
 - How appropriate is your nonverbal communication? How well have you used your notecards, read your paper, or presented in whatever other fashion you prepared?

2. Your Q&A time. How well have you managed time to allow for questions? How graciously do you receive them? How comprehensively do you answer them?
3. Your questions after other presentations. How well do you interact with other presenters? How cogent are your questions?

FYE Roundtables

During the FYE Roundtables, you and your partner will discuss and analyze your topic(s) for 15 minutes total. Each of you will prepare individual 7-8 minute presentations for your peers from other FYE classes; your 7-8 minutes may connect (for a shared presentation) or not (like a panel). Prepare knowing that your audience may not have any background knowledge about this issue. You should therefore inform your peers, inspire discussion, and persuade them of your conclusions. Your presentation must have a clear thesis, supporting arguments and evidence, and counterarguments and evidence.

Do not merely read a paper to your peers: instead, prepare notes to help you stay organized and speak engagingly with your audience. You are welcome to provide handouts as visual aids to the presentation, but you cannot use Power Point or a similar program. Also prepare to respond to 5-10 minutes of questions from your audience.

Documented Essay

The documented essay reflects your individual research interests. What question continues to interest you uniquely even as you and your partner, if you are working as a pair, tackle a common subject? What conclusion will you come to about that issue, and why? Continue to gather evidence and hone your research question, learning what scholars and others say about the topic. Make your own conclusions, based on the evidence and your own critical thinking. Then write a documented essay that argues an answer to your research question.

- Make sure that your essay is argument-driven, not just summarizing your research but clearly presenting your research in a way that combines what you have read and learned with what you now think about the subject.
- Support your conclusions persuasively with the evidence you collect.
- Address counter-arguments.
- A significant portion of your source material should come from scholarly material (ie articles from peer-reviewed journals), but you should also include various other sources as needed for your particular topic: interviews that you conduct (in person, by phone, or via email), journalistic articles and opinion pieces, books and essays, etc.
- Use at least two different kinds of evidence: charts, other presentations of quantitative data, quotations, etc.
- Write 6-8 pages, not including your Works Cited page(s).
- Cite all of your sources using the MLA documentation style.
- Craft a substantive title.

Your documented essay is due via email by midnight Thursday, December 2.