**Causal Argument Assignment Sheet**

**Purpose/Description:** For your first major essay in English 2000, you will write a causal analysis, a type of essay in which you either: a) identify a particular phenomenon and discuss the resulting effects or consequences, or b) identify a particular phenomenon and discuss the underlying causes. Our readings from *Writing Arguments* explain what a causal argument is and how it differs from other types of arguments. In other words, you can discuss a cause in relation to your topic that leads to several effects or an effect that has several causes. In either case, be sure to address the stakes of your analysis, answer the “so what?” or “why does it matter?” question for your reader throughout.

**Topic Focus:** Your research proposals should help you to narrow down your topic to a specific phenomenon or problem whose causes or effects can be addressed in 4 to 5 pages (minimum 1000 words). For example, attempting to discuss the possible causes of domestic violence would be way too broad for this assignment. Instead of focusing on domestic violence as a whole, you might narrow down your topic to examining the reasons why women convicted of violent crimes receive longer prison sentences than men, for instance, or the results of batterer rehabilitation programs.

**Grading Criteria:** I will provide a rubric for our peer review day and assess the following elements in your final draft:

1. Success with Genre: Does your essay include the important features of a causal analysis (discussed and defined in our textbook)? Do you describe the causes or effects of the issue you are investigating? Do you discuss the stakes/sources/rebuttals and analyze their positions in relation to your own causal argument? Do you provide sufficient evidence/sources to support your claims? Do you provide your readers with any background information they need without spending all your time summarizing the issue as a whole?

2. Organization: Is your essay logically organized? Do you include an introduction in which you state your main point/thesis statement (your causal claim)? Do you have a strong conclusion? Are your paragraphs focused, and do you use transitions and topic sentences effectively?

3. Use of Sources: Does your essay appropriately and accurately paraphrase and quote from the sources you are using with MLA style in-text citations? Do you include a properly formatted MLA works cited sheet? Do you discuss your source’s argument in a way that your reader knows how you are using that source in your argument?

For this assignment, you are **REQUIRED** to cite a minimum of **five sources. At least three of these must be scholarly sources**. The other two may be popular or scholarly.

4. Writing Style and Mechanics: Is your writing clear and coherent? Is it concise? Is it well-edited and free from mistakes in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and word usage. Does it meet the length requirement of 1000 words not including headers or works cited sheet? Do you include a title?