

Causal Analysis

The Assignment: For your second major essay of 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 b) identify a particular phenomenon and discuss the underlying causes. In other words, you can discuss a cause that leads to several effects or an effect that has several causes. In either case, be sure to address the stakes of your analysis, answering the question, “Why should I care?”

Topic Selection: Work to narrow down your topic to a specific phenomenon or problem whose causes or effects can be addressed in 4 to 5 pages. 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 assess the following elements in your final draft:

1. Success with Genre: Does your essay include the important features of a causal analysis (see ch. 14 in our textbook)? Do you describe the causes or effects of the issue you are investigating? Do you discuss the stakes? Do you provide sufficient evidence to support your claims? Do you provide your readers with any background information they need?
2. Organization: Is your essay logically organized? Do you include an introduction in which you state your main point (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 citations?

For this assignment, you are REQUIRED to cite a minimum of six sources. At least four of these must be secondary sources. The other two may be primary or secondary.

4. Writing Style and Mechanics: Is your writing clear and understandable? Is it concise? Is it well-edited and free from mistakes in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and word usage.

Length: 1300-1700 words.

Deadlines:

First Draft: March 17. Bring two printed copies to class for peer review.

Second Draft: March 22. Bring two printed copies to class for peer review.

Final Draft: March 24. Post final draft to Moodle before 12 p.m. Bring all other drafts and peer review sheets to class.