Essay 3 Assignment:

Overview:
Write a 2500-2700 word essay where you analyze a social issue or conflict—either a specific governmental policy or piece of legislation or something germane to your major—in America today and put forth a detailed, focused, researched argument about it. For this essay, you will identify a social controversy surrounding your social issue, and you will use research to argue one position that you deem most reasonable concerning the issue. As with your first and second essays, you must present and support a motive that explains the debate or interesting complication and a thesis that clearly announces your position on the debate or issue and how you plan to argue your position. Unlike your previous essays, now you will need to provide your own research for your argument.

Research Sources:
You can use as many secondary sources as necessary, but you must use at least 5 valid—i.e., scholarly—secondary sources for the main argument of the essay. In other words, your research in your body paragraphs must be from legitimate academic sources. Below, I begin to point you toward sources that are legitimate academic sources for your argument.

As a class, we will be developing research topics and questions through workshops. These questions and topics will serve as a model that you can use when developing your own research question and focus. It will be your responsibility to come up with your own unique researched argument for this assignment. No two students should cover the same topic in the same way.

In order to help you arrive at unique topics, you will be using a film as a springboard toward your topic. This will allow you to explore your interests before selecting a topic. You will choose a recent film that you believe compellingly depicts a social issue. Then you will use the film to seize upon a contemporary social issue. It is up to you whether or not you decide to incorporate the film into your research paper.

Example Film and Topics: One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest

1. Changing Treatments of Mental Illness Caused by Trauma—Has PTSD finally been fully understood or appreciated?

2. (Mis)Treatment of Mentally Ill Patients—How far have we really come as a society?

3. Prison Incarceration/Treatment of Mentally Ill Patients – Do the criminally insane belong in prisons or hospitals?

4. Experimental Psychological Treatments – What new treatments are controversial?

5. Current Psychopharmacology – At what point is the cure worse than the disease?

6. Ethics of Isolating the Mentally Ill – Should the mentally ill be allowed to coexist (section 8, halfway houses, etc.)?
Finding a Film and Social Debate:
Ask yourself:
Will you be able to find research for the things that interest you in the film?
Can you imagine potential arguments (and counterarguments) you could make about your topic?
Come up with at least six-eight research-worthy topics that the film inspires:

Sources:
For this essay, you will need to draw from a variety of scholarly sources when making your argument.
We will use the library instructional to cover the kinds of sources which are valid for this assignment. It is
your responsibility to learn and know which sources are legitimate. If you are in doubt about a source,
run it by me. Ultimately, you must use a minimum of 5 sources for the assignment. Here is a short list of
valid and invalid sources:

Legitimate Sources for your argument:
- Books
  - must be 20 years old or younger (older books cleared by me first)
  - must be written by an author who is a legitimate ‘expert’ in the field
    - either a professor or professional practitioner

- Journal articles from any of the library databases
  - must use peer-reviewed scholarly sources
  - must use articles that are at least 2000 words long

- Official governmental websites (.govs)

- Legitimate newspapers (Boston Globe, New York Times, Wall Street Journal, etc.)
  - When using newspapers, use official, large city newspapers and avoid regional and
    small publications. Use papers for factual information about events which occurred. Do
    not use newspapers as you would critical sources.

- Legitimate polls (Pew, Gallup, Bloomberg, etc.), if necessary, but be very careful with these.
  They are not strong sources for your argument. They instead offer some perspective on
  typical views on your subject.

Sources You Can Use in Your Opener and Closer But Not for Your Argument:
- Magazine articles from the library databases
- You may use reviews of the film, but you should run them by me first.

Sources You Cannot Use:
- No textbooks
- No book reviews
- No editorials (OP EDs, blogs, etc.)
- No personal websites (.coms)
- You cannot cite Wikipedia
- You cannot cite or use the CQ Researcher
List of Assignments: See syllabus for due dates

E3A1 – Research Proposal/Introductory Paragraph:
Use the course materials to produce an introductory paragraph that provides an opener, gives sufficient context for all the major people and issues concerned, and presents a clear ‘problem’ (motive) that you will investigate and a clear ‘position’ (thesis) that you will argue. Produce a correctly formatted header, heading, title, and bibliography for this assignment.

E3A2 – Annotated Bibliography and Outline:
See Annotated Bibliography Assignment.

Outline:
Produce an outline for the argument you present in the body paragraphs. Use the reverse outline model posted on BB. Append the outline to a new page after the bibliography.

E3A3 – Full Draft: Note – If you do not submit a draft, I will not accept your final essay.
Draft:
Use class workshops and discussion to produce a 2500 word draft that is your best attempt at completing the assignment. Be sure to meet the minimum word requirement for the draft and to get the formatting and citation correct. Your draft grade will be based on how well you format the essay and citations and on how well you organize your argument: Title, Intro, M1, M2, Thesis, and Conclusion.

Produce M1, M2, and Thesis sections for the essay. Each paragraph must contain transitions that restate the previous paragraph’s idea and connect it to the new paragraph; topic sentences that clearly announce the main claim of the paragraph; evidence, analysis and warrant that effectively support the main claim of the paragraphs; and wrap up sentences that finalize the main point of each paragraph and tie it back to the thesis. All paragraphs should be roughly half-a-page long. Produce correct in-text citation for your sources. Revise your bibliography to include all sources you cite.

Conclusion:
Your draft must contain a complete conclusion. Use the course materials to produce a full conclusion for your essay, complete with restated thesis, summation of strongest evidence, and closer.

E3A4 – Peer Review
Peer Review will be setup in class and done for homework. You will need to post your responses to peers on the group discussion board, and you will also need to turn in your checklist to me. Peer review is graded on the merit and strength of the comments you give peers.

E3A5 – Revision Cover Letter
Use the class handout to compose a correctly formatted revision cover letter. Your letter must be formatted in the mode of a formal business letter, as you would write for an employer.
Final Essay Must Be a Significant Evolution of an Idea Through Various Drafts:
All essays in this class should be a significant revision of your initial drafts. You must think through my and your peer’s comments carefully and figure out how best to develop your draft. But you must also go beyond the comments we give you to develop what you consider to be the best essay you can. My and your peer’s comments are only guidelines for your more extensive revision. You must take the initiative to improve the essay on your own. Avoid merely changing the things on which we comment. Make major changes that actually develop your explanation, evidence, analysis, organization, and coherence from draft to final. A large part of your final grade depends on how well you have revised the idea. You are responsible for the final product you submit. Further, it is ultimately your responsibility to bring to bear all of the techniques and methods we discuss in class throughout the semester. If you are unsure about how best to revise your essay, it is your responsibility to ask for help.

Review the MLA and APA Formatting and Style Guides in order to see how to format your research essay. Review the samples online. It is also your responsibility to learn how to document the various kinds of sources you bring into the essay. It is your responsibility to make sure your essay adopts the formatting and citation guidelines correctly.

All essays will be given a separate idea and support grade based on the merit of its idea and on the strength of your (researched) evidence and analysis. The fluidity of your organization; the clarity of your presentation; and the correctness of your grammar, quotation, and citation will add or detract points from your root idea and support grade. Remember that your essays must contain a full and correct bibliographical page.

Things I look for in the Final Essay:
- Correct and intriguing title
- Interesting opener and complete introduction (strong motive and thesis statements)
- Fully set up, developed, coherent, and evidenced body paragraphs with clear topic and transition sentences
- Properly set up discussions of sources
- Accuracy in adoption and use of secondary sources
- Thorough, intriguing, and complete analysis and argument
- Complete conclusion with compelling closer
- Correct quotation, mechanics, grammar, and length requirement
- Correct bibliography