Essay 1 Assignment:

Using Sources to Argue a Position

For this assignment you will write a 1500-1700 word essay where you take and defend one position in the U.S. drug policy debate. You will want to approach the assignment as if you were a lawyer, researching the current laws and advocating for your selected position while acknowledging and overcoming its shortcomings. You will need to consult various sources in order to define key terms, garner evidence, and make your case. You can use as many other secondary sources as necessary, but you must use the “Perspectives” document.

For your main argument, you must only use legitimate academic sources—below, I designate which kinds of sources are legitimate for your argument. As with all essays in this class, the entire essay must be focused on establishing and defending your one main argumentative point about the case. You will need to provide a motive and thesis that help you set up your main argument.

As a class, we will go over the various articles and discussions concerning the case. We will discuss the differences among the various critical sources and the official government documents. Our class searches will serve as a model that you can use when coming up with your own research for this case. You may find yourself needing to research specific drug policy terminology and concepts. You are not limited to things we cover in class, but you must be certain that you are using valid academic sources for your main argument. It will be your responsibility to come up with your own correct research for this assignment, should you choose to go beyond the class documents. As with all essays for this class, no two students should cover the same topic in the same way.

Sources:

Sources You Should Use in Your Main Argument:
- Official Government Documents:
  - [http://www.hoover.org/publications/books/8307](http://www.hoover.org/publications/books/8307)
  - [http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/SEN/Committee/371/ille/library/dolin2-e.htm](http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/SEN/Committee/371/ille/library/dolin2-e.htm)
  - [http://www.whitehouse.gov/ondcp](http://www.whitehouse.gov/ondcp)

Sources You Can Use to Set Up the Problem or to Explain Specific Positions:
- Encyclopedias or Other References Sources that will help you define key terms (*use only if you need to define key terms that are not easily defined using the above sources), i.e.:
  - [http://thelawdictionary.org/](http://thelawdictionary.org/)

Sources You CANNOT Use:
- No textbooks
- No book reviews
- No editorials (OP EDs, blogs, etc., unless they are by a pertinent key figure or figures)
- No personal websites (.coms)
- You cannot cite Wikipedia
- You cannot cite or use the CQ Researcher
Review the MLA and APA Formatting and Style Guides in order to see how to format your essay and your citations. Review the samples online. It is your responsibility to learn how to document the various kinds of sources you bring into the essay—i.e. how to produce correct in-text citations for the sources and how to produce a correct bibliography. It is your responsibility to make sure your essay adopts the formatting and citation guidelines correctly.

List of Assignments: See syllabus for due dates

E1A1 – 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, provides a methodology, 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.

E1A2 – Body Paragraphs and Outline:
Body Paragraphs
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.

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.

E1A3 – Conclusion and Full Draft: Note – If you do not submit a draft, I will not accept your final essay.
Draft:
Use class workshops and discussion to revise E1A2 into a 1500 word draft that is your best attempt at completing the E1 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.

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

E1A4 – 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.
E1A5 – 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.

Grammar and Documentation Quizzes

For your benefit, we will go over some basic grammatical instruction and what may, for some of you, be some new approaches to grammar. We will also cover MLA and APA formatting. You will be taking some quizzes on this material, but these will not carry an official grade and thus will not impact your GPA. Use the class discussion and quiz responses to figure out what aspect of your grammar, mechanics, and citation you can strengthen.

Final Essay Must Be a Significant Evolution of an Idea Through Various Drafts:

All essays in this class should go through significant revisions. 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 through the stages and 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 essay. Review the samples online. It is your responsibility to learn how to document the various kinds of sources you bring into the essay. You need to make sure your essay adopts the formatting and citation guidelines correctly.

Your essay will be graded based on the merit of its idea, the strength of your (researched) evidence and analysis, the effectiveness of your organization, the correctness of your citation and formatting. The fluidity of your organization; the clarity of your presentation; and the correctness of your grammar, quotation, and citation will constitute the bulk of your grade. Not meeting or far-surpassing the word limit requirement of the assignment will negatively impact the 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 word limit
- Correct bibliography