Essay 2: Assessing the Conversation | Due: Outline – Oct. 16, Draft - Oct. 23, Final Draft - Oct. 30

Goal:
The goal of this assignment is to explore and practice critical textual analysis, assess the scope of a conversation, and identify further areas of inquiry.

Assignment:
Before joining a conversation or answering a Big Question, we must understand what has been said and what has been settled already, as well as what hasn't been said or remains unsettled. To aid in this process, researchers write what is called a "literature review." A literature review is an overview of the research pertinent to your topic that shows you are familiar with the conversation and the different perspectives. **Your assignment is write a literature review of your topic that analyzes a range of texts' argument, supporting evidence, and rhetorical context and strategies, and presents a clear picture of the conversation you are looking to take part in.**

The final essay should do the following, in **four to five double-spaced pages** (12-point Times New Roman font, one-inch margins on all sides, no extra space between paragraphs, no superfluous spacing)**:**

- Include an introduction that frames and defines the scope of your essay;
- Use **four to five credible/reputable sources** to compose body paragraphs that offer insight into the current and ongoing conversation;
- Provide a clear sense of the different (relevant) perspectives on the issue, including what is established/accepted by most/all and what is still open to debate;
- Explain and analyze each text's core argument and support, as well as the text's rhetorical context and rhetorical strategies;
- Identify the author, source of the text, etc., and analyze their credibility;
- Identify any "gaps" in the conversation, such as areas still ripe for exploration, connections missed by others, opportunities to build on ideas, different approaches to the subject, Natural Next Questions, etc.;
- Conclude by giving a brief overview of the important findings of the literature and a sense of where your own research will likely go based on any gaps/unsettled issues/ Natural Next Questions you have identified;
- Properly and accurately cite all resources used in the paper using an appropriate citation style.

Invention and Inquiry:
In preparing this assignment, formulate an inquiry question (either your **Big Question** or a question related to that Big Question) that specifically describes what you would like to know. Follow the **Question Cycle** and create **Content Summaries** for each potential source you find. Conduct in-depth research, building on the research you have already done. As you locate potential resources, skim the articles to determine if they correspond well to your topic <u>and</u> inquiry question. Examine the sources that these articles cite and track the conversation. Find more articles than you need to determine which are most relevant. Not all information is reliable or relevant.

Read the articles and begin to sort and classify them according to their findings/arguments. Analyze their rhetorical contexts and strategies and evaluate their arguments. Organize the articles in a meaningful way that will help present a narrative of the conversation around your inquiry question. **Remember that you are not taking a position** but analyzing the current conversation you are joining.

Audience and Tone:
The audience are those interested in joining this conversation as well a but don't necessarily have a deep understanding of it. This essay should be written using authoritative language to present your findings. Your tone should be professional and informative, but not overly formal.

If you have any questions or concerns about this assignment, I encourage you to e-mail me or come see me during my office hours. Also consider visiting the Miller Writing Center for help.