

## The Researched Essay Assignment

This will be, ultimately, a **12- to 20-page researched essay** (MLA, CMS or APA formatted) about a hoax, prank, urban legend, fake news story, or conspiracy theory that you have researched. **The focus here is to determine *what drives a belief and what it says about human culture*.** For example, if your topic is Big Foot, do not focus on whether claims about Big Foot are true or false; focus instead on the history and origins of Big Foot stories, how they are conveyed, the cultural implications, etc.

The only requirements for this paper (other than that you be interested in your topic) are that you make use of at least ten sources; two of which must be **books from the library**. This requirement will ensure that you not only get to know the library; it will also ensure that you think about how reliable your resources are. **You can use primary research that you collect, such as surveys and interviews, and we will talk about how to do this in class.**

In this paper it will be absolutely necessary for you to **do more than simply summarize what you've found out**. You'll need reasoned opinions and ideas about what you've found out as well, and your piece, while it need not have a thesis per se, **must make a point**.

We will, over the course of the next weeks, spend a good deal of time going through the research process, and I'm confident that you'll come out with a fine product at the end of that time.

### Genre Options

- **The Researched essay.** Here you have a research question that you explore and then write about in a coherent way; you do not take in all the information you can and spew it back at the reader. You are writing to make a point.
- **A Research Piece in Your Field.** If you really know what field you will be going into, then you can do a research paper in your field. You will want to follow the conventions of the field, which means in Education, you would be using headings and subheadings to organize your piece and APA as your style-guide. You do not take in all the information you can and spew it back at the reader. You are writing, as you have in all your other pieces in this class, to make a point. If you choose to do this, make an appointment with Doug to talk about specifics for your research piece.

### The Requirements

- 12–20 pages in length, **including** your list of references, photos, and works cited.
- The first draft will be at least four pages, including all notes taken for your paper, and your first draft **must have a works cited or references page**.
- The final paper is due at the end of the quarter.

### Some Options

- You may want to think about doing field research for your paper, which could involve **interviews, field-notes and participant observation, focus groups, or surveys**.

### The Role

You are an expert in the field who wants to communicate your **knowledge** and your **opinions and ideas** clearly. Thus, you want to write confidently and with a purpose. **Also, you need to make sure that you are getting at what your hoax, conspiracy theory, fake news, or urban legend is saying about our culture.**

### Due Dates

- First Draft : (10–15 pages, including works cited and notes)
- Final Draft: (12–20 pages, including notes and a *complete* list of “References” or “Works Cited”)