

PERSUASIVE ESSAY
ENGLISH 125.068

DUE DATES:

Rough draft: Wednesday, 3 November. Bring 4 copies to class.
Final: Monday, 10 November. Bring 2 copies to class, along with your personal reflection, rough draft, peer reviewer comments, and peer review worksheets.

FORMAT:

5 pages, 12pt Times New Roman, double spaced, one inch margins, stapled. Attach a Works Cited page to the end of your essay. The Works Cited page does not count toward or against the five page limit (that is, your final product will be 6 pages in length: 5 of essay, and 1 of end matter).

YOUR ASSIGNMENT:

Construct an essay in which you attempt to convince your audience of a contentious point. Take care to back up your assertions with evidence, and to cite properly.

You face three main challenges:

First, you must provide a context for your argument. Though you have all taken great pains with your descriptive essays, you cannot assume that everyone in your audience has read your earlier work. Define essential terms, but be sure to focus on your argument. Economy becomes more important as the assignments become more complex.

Second, you must adhere strictly to the rules of logic. Good arguments rely on reason and evidence, not emotion and supposition.

Third, you must anticipate and address objections to your argument. You will be most convincing if you can get inside the head of someone who would object to your point and address counterpoints before your opponents can bring them up.

A successful persuasive essay operates like a practitioner of Aikido: direct and forceful when necessary, while also able to anticipate an opponent's tactics and turn aggressive momentum against the attacker. To that end, your prose should be bold, direct, and specific, and your argument should anticipate and account for opposing points of view. Avoid generalization and overstatement. Bluster only opens you up to an opponent.