

SYNTHESIS ESSAY
ENGLISH 125.068

DUE DATES:

Rough draft: Wednesday, 19th November. Bring 3 copies to class.
Final: Wednesday, 26th November. Hand in 2 copies along with your peer reviews, worksheets, and personal response.

FORMAT:

5 pages, 12pt Times New Roman, double spaced, one inch margins, stapled. Include a works cited page, which neither counts for or against the page limit (that is, you will hand in five pages of prose plus your works cited page).

YOUR ASSIGNMENT:

Construct an essay in which you attempt to persuade your audience of a contentious point, which is itself produced by the synthesis of at least two opposing points of view. Take care to back up your assertions with evidence, and to cite properly. Observe all the strictures from the persuasive essay, but keep the following in mind:

Synthesis differs from simple persuasion in one important aspect. Though you will still present an argument, which is to say you will be arguing *for* one claim and *against* another, your argument itself must be the synthesis of two or more points.

This is the most sophisticated form of writing we will attempt this semester, and it is also the most likely to be useful to you in your academic careers. As before, adhere strictly to the rules of logic and take care to anticipate objections to your argument. Good luck.

BY WAY OF EXAMPLE:

In your persuasive essay you might have argued that open source software is ethically more tenable than proprietary software. This is a standard argumentative form: claim A is true, while its opposite, claim B, is false. In this paper, however, you will argue something like the following: computer software does not fall neatly into the established categories of *product* (something you buy at the store) or *knowledge* (something that enriches your understanding). Rather, it is both a product and a piece of knowledge simultaneously. Because of this, we must formulate a new understanding, outside of the frameworks established so far by our concepts of capitalism and science. When writing a synthetic argument, you will take two or more points of view, none of which is itself satisfying, and create from them a composite that more accurately reflects the truth. Once you have created that composite, you will argue for its validity.