

GNED 1401: WRITING FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS
FINAL RESEARCH PAPER (POLICY ESSAY)

Deadline

December 3rd, 2025 at 11:59 pm (for feedback via D2L)

Submission Guidelines

Submit your essay as a Word document to the designated drop box in D2L. Be sure to include the link to your Google Doc in the “Submission Notes” and ensure you’ve set the permissions correctly, giving your instructor editing access. Please consult the course outline for the policies regarding late assignments and assignment submissions. Failure to comply may result in a grade penalty.

Faustian Bargain

You may take an additional two (2) days to complete the assignment without penalty. Per the terms of the bargain (see course outline), you will simply receive a grade in D2L, and you assume the responsibility of making an appointment with me once the grades have been entered, if you wish to receive any feedback.

Objective

Over the semester, we’ve discussed entering and contributing to an existing conversation. We’ve also examined how thinking critically and writing clearly can bring about change – in one’s perceptions, in one’s beliefs, and in one’s actions. Your task for your final research assignment is to select, research, and develop a position on an issue/problem that interests you and/or that you feel strongly about.

The final **research paper will take the form of a policy essay. Your policy essay should have a clear thesis/claim that identifies your intended audience (i.e., who is in a position to affect change)**, the problem/issue being addressed, and your call to action. To persuade your audience to agree with your proposed solution, **you will use outside sources to substantiate your claim/position**. To gain credibility with this audience, **you need to show that you are well-informed, that you understand the issue/problem in all its facets, and that you have considered (and addressed) opposing points of view**. N.B., essays on highly charged topics, such as abortion, capital punishment, and euthanasia, will not be accepted.

Research Requirements

For this essay, outside research is required. **Using at least six (6) secondary sources**, you will demonstrate the merits of your proposed solution. Your research will consist primarily of relevant and reliable sources found via the **MRU Library’s catalog and databases. Four of the six sources used in your paper must be scholarly (ideally, peer-reviewed)**. The remaining **secondary sources need not be scholarly**; however, you should **carefully evaluate your remaining sources** (i.e., your source’s author and his/her expertise, its reliability, its currency, its audience, and its sponsorship).

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When conducting your research, focus on the following:

- Discover all the reasonable positions (“sides”) that have been taken on this issue/problem and what these arguments entail.
- Learn about the history and background of the issue/problem so you know how it evolved.
- Uncover the current and relevant facts/information related to your issue/problem as well as your position.

Your assignment will be graded on how effectively it meets the above criteria as well as the following: the clarity of your writing and thinking; your writing style; the organization of the essay as a whole; your adherence to MLA guidelines; and the depth and quality of your research. This assignment is a culmination of the skills you’ve been developing over this semester.

Length and Appearance

Your essay must be **approx. 1,500 words** (excluding the “Works Cited” page). Your essay must be typed (using 12-point Times New Roman font) and double-spaced. Moreover, your assignment must follow the conventions of MLA format, as outlined here:

https://library.mtroyal.ca/ld.php?content_id=34487454.

MLA Documentation

Your paper must follow the MLA guidelines for proper formatting and citation. A complete and accurate Works Cited page is required, and all citations must adhere to current MLA guidelines. You must also use parenthetical references (i.e., in-text citations) in the body of your essay every time you cite (i.e., quote, paraphrase, or summarize) a secondary source.

Copies of Secondary Sources

For verification purposes, **you must submit a copy of the “title page” for all secondary sources cited in your essay.** You must also submit any pages of those sources that you cite in your essay. Please highlight the portion of the document you cited in your essay and staple this to the source’s title page. Entire journal articles, book chapters, etc. are not required, nor are they desired. Only highlight and submit the portion of the document cited in your essay. These should be organized according to the order in which they appear in your Works Cited list and should be submitted along with your essay for it to be considered complete. **N.B., simply supplying links to articles and e-books is not sufficient to fulfill this requirement of the assignment. Failure to submit copies of your secondary sources may result in late marks and/or failure of the assignment.**

Plagiarism

All written work must be original. As with all assignments, you are expected to conduct your research with integrity and due diligence, properly distinguishing your ideas from those of your sources. Summaries and paraphrases must be written in your own words, and direct quotations

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must be enclosed in quotation marks. N.B., Students who attempt to cite, but fail to fully document their sources (i.e., paraphrases too close to the original, missing quotation marks, and/or incorrect in-text citations) may not receive a passing grade. Students who fail to conform to MLA guidelines or who use another's words and ideas without proper attribution will receive a grade of zero. All incidents of plagiarism will be reported to the Office of Student Community Standards.

Quality

Pay attention to language and grammar. Write in standard English/academic prose (avoid slang and contractions). **Ensure that you've edited your text for spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors.** An essay is the best expression of your thoughts and writing abilities and will be judged accordingly. In other words, spend at least as much time rewriting (editing and proofreading) as you spend on your first draft. Rewriting is where your argument (and grade) will improve.

Student Learning Services

Student Learning Services can also help you improve your writing. Either make an appointment to meet one-on-one with a Writing and Learning Strategist or take advantage of the drop-in service offered at the library. See the Student Learning Services website for more information:

<http://www.mtroyal.ca/AcademicSupport/ResourcesServices/StudentLearningServices/WritingLearningServices/index.htm>.

Questions

If you have any questions regarding this assignment, please do not hesitate to contact me.