

Précis Assignment

For this assignment, you will choose one of the following three online essays and create an 100-word abstract for the essay and write a 2 page critical response to it.

Step 1:

Select one of the following essays:

- Mander, Jerry. "Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television."
<http://www.eco-action.org/dt/elimtv.html>
- Rushkoff, Douglas. "Walter's Wireless World." (the first section)
<http://www.thefeature.com/article?articleid=100290>
- Harris, Janelle. "If It's all About The Benjamins, Has Hip Hop Been Souled Out?"
<http://www.urbanthinktank.org/hiphopsouledout.cfm>

Note: If you have any trouble locating an essay, e-mail your tutorial leader immediately and include "2920" and the essay author in the subject line. We will send it to you as an attachment

Step 2:

Write a 95-105-word abstract of the essay. An abstract is a summary that covers all major arguments made by the author and indicates the major topics of the essay. It does not necessarily cover historical details, minor sub-arguments, etc. The challenge will be to cover all major information in this limited space. Please provide a word count (easily obtained through your word processing program) at the end of the abstract. For information on abstracting, consult:

- <http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/bizwrite/abstracts.html>
- <http://www.rpi.edu/web/writingcenter/abstracts.html>

Step 3:

On separate pages (i.e. the abstract does not count as part of these pages), write a short (2-3 page) analytical critique of the essay. Issues to consider include:

1. Are the arguments of the author valid? Why or why not? Try to be as specific as possible in your analysis and point to examples from the essay to support your evaluation.
2. Is the evidence used to support major points valid? Why or why not?
3. Can you think of strong counter-arguments that have not been addressed by the author? Why do you think these have not been addressed?
4. Are their topics relevant to the issues raised in the essay that have been overlooked by the author but are important to a full and complete discussion of this issue?
5. Is the writing style, vocabulary, organizational structure, and grammar used by the author effective in making her/his point?

6. Offer a stylistic critique of the prose and suggest changes (if any) that you feel would have helped make the piece more effective.

7. Has the essay impacted your opinion on the topic at hand? Why or why not?

Your essay should be typed, double-spaced, 1" margins (check your defaults), 12-point Times or Times New Roman font with all pages stapled together.

Answers to some common questions, or five big BUTs:

1. Yes, your opinion is needed for this assignment BUT it should be backed up with examples, solid argumentation, and clear prose.
2. We do not assume any expertise (beyond being a student in 2920) on the topics covered in these essays BUT you should choose the essay you feel most comfortable with in terms of subject area.
3. The above questions should provide lots of issues for you to explore BUT they do not constitute an outline for the final version of the essay.
4. We are happy to help you if you have questions BUT you need to leave time for a response and not expect a "recipe" for writing your essay.
5. You may use external material to support your analysis (this must be properly cited) BUT you do not have to do this if you can provide an adequate treatment with your own insights.

Late Policy:

Up to 3 Days: 20% Reduction

4-7 Days: 40% Reduction

More than 7 Days: Zero Points

(You may e-mail your essay to your tutorial leader in order to "fix" completion date, but you must turn in a hard copy within 3 days of e-mail submission. This policy only applies to late papers—on time submission requires a hard copy on the due date.)