Digital Source Analysis/ Bibliographic Essay: 
Analyzing Argumentation in a Digital Landscape

Objective
This assignment will give you an opportunity to practice analysis and evaluation of online sources. These skills represent an increasingly important component of 21st-century information literacy, which requires that we sift through an ever-expanding wealth of easily accessible information. For this assignment, you will critically navigate a small segment of this digital landscape by writing a short bibliographic essay in which you evaluate a series of argumentative online sources on a topic of your choosing.

Requirements
Your end result will be to research and write a 4-5 page bibliographic essay that introduces, explores, and analyzes 4-8 argumentative sources which are not peer reviewed or approved by an editorial board. These sources should all relate to the same topic, which must be a source of controversy for which you can find different arguments. Ideally, try to explore a different side of the topic than what you examined in your Literature Review by reviewing different kinds of sources than those you included in that paper. Below is a list of the specific formatting requirements for this assignment:

- Length: 4-5 double-spaced pages with 1" margins, not including title or reference pages. 12 pt. Times New Roman or a typeface of equivalent size. (I won’t penalize you if you exceed 5 pages as long as you remain on topic).

- Substantial descriptions and evaluations of 4-8 online, non-peer reviewed sources (including at least 3 sources not from Twitter or Facebook; see the next section for a more specific breakdown of the types of sources you can use).
  - A note on Twitter: Analyzing tweets could limit your ability to really look into your topic, given Twitter’s 240-character limit. With that in mind, in order to use Twitter toward the source requirement you will need to look at a specific hashtag or group of tweets.
  - In this The Verge August 2017 essay, “A small defense of the Twitter thread: A Twitter thread is like a poem,” Dieter Bohn (@backlon) provides a background on the good of tweeting, their threads, and the nature non-linear collaborative writing.

- APA format (title page and running header), including in-text (Author’s Last Name, Year, p. #) and reference page (here’s a starting point: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/05/) citations.
  - How to cite blogs, forum postings, and YouTube videos: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/10/
  - How to cite social media: http://blog.apastyle.org/apastyle/2013/10/how-to-cite-social-media-in-apa-style.html
  - How to cite a hashtag: http://blog.apastyle.org/apastyle/2015/02/how-to-cite-a-hashtag-in-apa-style.html
• You can use first-person voice to a limited extent when it contributes to your analysis (for example, if you are explaining how a website/forum works from personal experience, as in “The site was slow to load as I was accessing the page from home. This means that the site requires access to a fast internet connection.”)
• Remember: This is not an argumentative essay. Rather, it is an analytical essay in which you will explore the arguments of others. You'll get to write an argument of your own for our next assignment!

What to Look for When Choosing Sources
• Look for sources that are available exclusively online.
• Look for sources that are not peer reviewed or approved by an editorial board. Do not use scholarly journal articles, eBooks, or newspaper articles (except for opinion pieces). The point here is that it is up to you to evaluate the sources.
• Look for untraditional sources such as blogs, forum postings, tweets, Tumblr pages, and YouTube videos.
• Look for a combination of sources substantial enough that you can carry out a detailed analysis and meet the assignment requirements. While I encourage you to make use of generally smaller sources like blogs, forum posts, and tweets, you may need to include more sources if you rely heavily on this type of material; that said, these types of sources can certainly vary in length and substance.
• Look for sources that will allow you to analyze two or more sides of the issue as evenly as possible.
• Try to look for sources you did not already use and analyze for your Genre Analysis and Literature Review. These may include sources you wanted to use, but later discarded.

Structure
Note that, while similar in structure, a bibliographic essay is not the same thing as an annotated bibliography, so look at this as an opportunity to engage with a new, albeit familiar, genre. The primary difference is that you will include your reference page citations on the reference page rather than using them to separate and introduce paragraph-length descriptions of each source, as you would in an annotated bib. Therefore, you can think of the bibliographic essay as the annotated bib's more seamless cousin (also, because of this difference you will need to include in-text citations). Also note that this assignment is like a simpler version of the Lit Review assignment, focusing on analysis rather than research.
• Include brief introduction and conclusion paragraphs, and transition between the different sources you are analyzing within the body of the paper. While it could make sense for you to devote a paragraph to each source, this genre allows you some flexibility. For example, you could pair a group of short, similar sources into one paragraph, or you could devote two paragraphs to different aspects of a particularly interesting or substantial source. You can reserve your comparison and contrast of different sources for your conclusion, or you can weave it throughout your paper’s body paragraphs.
• Feel free to organize your analysis of individual sources by following the bullet points listed below under “Questions to Consider as You Analyze Your Sources.”

Questions to Consider as You Analyze Your Sources
The list below provides a series of questions, divided by category, for you to consider as you conduct your analysis of each source and its argument. Feel free to comment on things that aren’t specifically mentioned in these questions, as long as they contribute to your analysis. I have listed these questions by the order in which you might want to answer them. While you can address each category of questions in detail, the “Credibility and Strength of Argument” section is the most crucial for your analysis.

• Brief Description: What does this source look like? What is its genre and where can it be found? Is it visually interesting? What is it about?

• Rhetorical Situation: What is the rhetorical situation surrounding this source and its argument?
  ▪ Who are the writers/speakers? What kind of audience do they have in mind? (In other words, what online community are they engaging with, and how does this affect their argumentative choices? Do they play well towards their intended audience? Is this an interactive community, and do you see evidence of audience participation/feedback?) What is their argumentative purpose? (Here consider whether this source was created in direct response to something else that is online.) What kinds of constraints are imposed by their choice of genre (think Genre Analysis)?

• Credibility and Strength of Argument (this is the category you should focus on the most): Do the writers/speakers establish ethos (credibility/authority/appropriate values and moral character)? Why or why not? Do they have a strong argument? Is it internally consistent, and does it provide sufficient evidence for its claims (logos)? Also feel free to comment on the authors’ use of emotional appeals (pathos). By answering the questions in this category, you should be able to evaluate the authors’ effectiveness in achieving their purpose.
  ▪ You may find the following Purdue OWL resource useful as you review the classical rhetorical appeals (ethos, pathos, and logos):
    https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/588/04/

• Comparison/Contrast: Do you see any similarities or differences between this source/argument and others you are examining? Feel free to begin your paragraphs by introducing the sources/arguments they focus on, but consider how you can transition between sources and show relationships between them through comparison and contrast. This could be especially interesting if you find analyze a pair of sources that were created in direct conversation with each other.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>Specific, developed analysis and insightful observations</td>
<td>Analysis is generally sound but could be more specific or insightful in some areas.</td>
<td>General and/or undeveloped analysis.</td>
<td>Analysis is sparse and lacks insight.</td>
<td>No relevant analysis or insightful observations made.</td>
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<tr>
<td>50 pts.</td>
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<td>Supporting Details</td>
<td>Comprehensive and specific examples strongly support the analysis and/or are relevant to the topic.</td>
<td>Sufficient and specific examples appropriately support the analysis and/or are relevant to the topic.</td>
<td>Adequate or general examples support the analysis and/or are relevant to the topic.</td>
<td>An attempt has been made to add supporting details, but it is unrelated or confusing.</td>
<td>There is no evident attempt to add relevant supporting details.</td>
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<tr>
<td>45 pts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Analysis of sources is organized coherently into paragraphs. Relationships between ideas within individual paragraphs are clear.</td>
<td>Analysis of sources is organized somewhat coherently into paragraphs. Relationships between ideas within individual paragraphs are mostly clear.</td>
<td>Analysis of sources is organized adequately, but there are major lapses in organization.</td>
<td>An attempt has been made to provide a sense of organization, but it is confusing.</td>
<td>There is no evident attempt to provide a sense of organization.</td>
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<td>45 pts.</td>
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<td>Writing Fluency: Clear, Concise, Correct</td>
<td>Skillful writing fluency, exhibits few or no mechanical errors.</td>
<td>Reasonable writing fluency, exhibits few mechanical errors.</td>
<td>Writing fluency is lacking, exhibits several mechanical errors.</td>
<td>Minimal writing fluency, exhibits numerous mechanical errors.</td>
<td>Writing is not fluent, exhibits severe mechanical errors.</td>
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<td>30 pts.</td>
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<td>APA and Documentation</td>
<td>Sources are cited correctly in the document and on the reference page.</td>
<td>Sources are cited, but there are a few formatting errors.</td>
<td>Sources are cited, but there are several formatting errors.</td>
<td>Some of the sources are not cited and/or there are severe formatting errors.</td>
<td>Sources are not cited at all.</td>
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<td>30 pts.</td>
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Rubrics are subject to slight revisions. Students will be notified of changes.