**Focused Research and the Annotated Bibliography**

**College Composition II – Spring 2015**

**Focused Research**

Now that you have selected your research/argumentative issue for our class, it is time for you to begin focused research. In this stage of research you should be searching for answers to the following questions:

* What is the background, context, and history of the issue? How are terms defined? Are they defined differently by different groups? How has the issue evolved over time? What are major historical events that have affected the issue?
* What are the ramifications for this issue? What is the significance of the issue (or focused issue) from multiple perspectives?
* What are specific arguments that are being made by these constituencies and what are their weaknesses and strengths? What is the nature of these arguments as related to Stasis Theory points?
* What are the major points/counterpoints on the issue? What are ideological/philosophical influences?
* What does the body of evidence look like in this issue and what is its value/credibility?
* Who are the constituencies involved and effected by the issue in the debate? Why they are engaged in the issue and how does the issue affect them?

Collecting research that answers these questions and provides examples of arguments, examples, illustrations, and background information on your issue well insure that you are able to construct sophisticated, well-informed, supportable argument of your own.

**The quality and success of your argumentative essays will be determined by the quality of your research. Complete and copious research usually means you will have a lot to write and know what you are writing about.**

**A general key to success in CCII is to not procrastinate in doing research.**

**Constructing an Annotated Bibliography**

An annotated bibliography is an academic document that researchers use to collect, understand, and share their research with others. Your CCII annotated bibliography will not only be the collection of your best research for the semester it will also document your ability to demonstrate the CCII learning goals associated with information literacy.

CCII Information Literacy Learning Goals:

* To know how to use various research tools, including databases, catalogues, and specialized search engines.
* To become skilled on how to find various types of information, such as articles, books, journals, websites, etc.
* To learn how to critically evaluate and select sources.
* To master summary and annotation writing
* To improve your ability to critically engage with resource texts.

The difference between an Annotated Bibliography and a Works Cited page is that a Works Cited page accompanies a particular text and only lists those sources referenced or used as support, illustration, or example in a specific text. An Annotated Bibliography contains cited sources but it also includes sources that a researcher consulted and that influenced the researcher’s thinking and writing about an issue. It may also contain sources that the researcher thinks are important for an outside reader who wants to become informed about the issue at hand to be aware of.

**What to include on your Annotated Bibliography**

**All the sources you use for evidence, support, or illustration in your argumentative essays automatically go on your Annotated Bibliography. The remainder of entries on your bibliography should:**

* Include those sources that influenced your thinking and understanding of the issue
* Include those sources that would help an outside reader understand an issue

Your Annotated Bibliography should represent depth of research (see questions under Focused Research above), represent multiple perspectives (not just one side of an argument/issue) and also represent breadth in the types of sources (it should include academic and popular sources--books, journal articles, websites, newspaper articles/editorials, multimedia, etc.). Finding information from multiple sources is important in focused research in that it provides access to different types of information and different perspectives on an issue.

**Selecting Sources for the Annotated Bibliography**

Your research should result in you finding many more sources than the minimum required amount for your Annotated Bibliography (and if it doesn’t then there is a problem, and you need to talk to me). The Annotated Bibliography will of course contain those sources you use in your argumentative essays, but you will need to evaluate your other found sources to decide which to include on your bibliography. Your decision to include a source on your Annotated Bibliography should be based on all the bulleted list/questions for the sections above: Focused Research, CCII Literacy Learning Goals, and What to Include in your Annotated Bibliography.

**Descriptive and Evaluative Summaries (the “Annotation”)**

For each of your Bibliography sources you must include a two-part summary--descriptive and evaluative.

**Summaries record information you may want to use in your own writing. Writing summaries will in themselves help you remember the content of what you have read. And summaries along with annotated copies of the original texts will help you quickly locate information you will want to use in your own essays.**

**Descriptive Summary**

A descriptive summary restates what a text actually says. A description generally provides…

* The gist or overarching main point of the text and its purpose.
* Rhetorical context for understanding the text
* The key claims the author provides to support the main point.
* Carefully selected examples to illustrate the author’s points/ideas.

Descriptive summaries are always written for a reader who is not familiar with the text at hand, so while summaries are brief, they need to be comprehensive. You do not include your own opinions about the text in a descriptive summary and you do not compare the text to any other text. A descriptive summary is written in an objective voice and it is always clear that the ideas in the summary belong to the authors. It is very important that descriptive summaries are accurate—stating the author’s message and content is an ethical responsibility in a descriptive summary.

**Evaluative Summary**

Technically, an evaluative summary can evaluate almost any aspect of a specific text. It could evaluate the quality of the communication, the depth and breadth of the text, the quality of the support and evidence—in other words it could critique or support the text. Unlike a descriptive summary, the person writing an evaluative summary interjects their own presence and ideas in the summary.

For your CCII evaluative summary you will evaluate usefulness/quality of the text. You evaluative summary will address the source’s credibility, strengths, and/or limitations, which would include

* Any or all of the three appeals of ethos, pathos, and logos
* The verifiability or accuracy of the information presented.
* The depth of information

Keep in mind that an entry in your bibliography may have more flaws than strengths and it may be an example of a flawed text that is representative of non-credible or questionable information surrounding your research issue.

**Specific Requirements for the Annotated Bibliography**

* **8 to 15 sources**
* **APA Format**
* **A descriptive and evaluative summary**

**The Annotated Bibliography is required in the CCII final portfolio**

**Evaluation Form for the Annotated Bibliography**

8 to 15 Sources Yes No

Annotated Bibliography reflects significant, deep research into the issue.

Strong\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Weak

Annotated Bibliography reflects that sources have been carefully selected. Sources are not repetitive and reflect the complexity of the issue and multiple perspectives.

Strong\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Weak

Annotated Bibliography reflects breadth in the type of sources and includes multiple types of texts—websites, formal academic sources, books, quality magazine articles, news editorials/articles and relevant multi-media, or social media sources, as appropriate for the issue.

Strong\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Weak

Summaries reflect an understanding of the genre/type of sources included.

Strong\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Weak

Descriptive summaries are clear, informative, and adhere to the guidelines of descriptive summary writing.

Strong\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Weak

Evaluative summaries are clear and show the ability to critically evaluate a source.

Strong\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Weak

APA Bibliographic Format is Correct.

Strong\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Weak

The degree that grammar and mechanics interfere with the clear communication of information.

Not at all\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Significantly