Literature Review Essay
Comp II: Natural Sciences and Health Professions

For our next major project you will write a literature review essay of 5-6 pp.  A literature review surveys recent research on a topic within a given field of study.  They are typically part of research reports, forming the introductory section in which the researchers describe how the problem they are investigating rose out of prior research.  However, they can also be stand alone essays written to assess what is known presently about a topic and to identify directions for future research.  Writers of review essays use a variety of indexes, databases, and other search tools to gather studies on a particular topic, distinguish important trends, patterns, and questions that arise in the research on that topic, then synthesize these into a concise portrait of research activity on that topic.  A review essay does not simply provide summaries of the research articles it reviews; it actively relates them to each other and to other areas of knowledge to show readers that they represent an coherent and substantive area of professional inquiry.

*Review Criteria*

Your review will examine at least six articles from professional journals in your field reporting original research on some subject currently of interest to those who work in it. (Note--your participation grade will increase by .1 for each appropriate, well-discussed study beyond 6, up to a maximum of .5)  All must have been published within the last five years. To locate these you must use at least three different search tools, at least one of which must be discipline-specific.  You may not use general search engines such as Google, Yahoo, Bing, etc.

The best topic ideas will come from readings and discussions in your other classes or from.  Ask your professors what are some interesting problems currently being studied in the discipline.  You might explore issues that you have identified yourself during your studies.

The essay must be organized into the four standard components of professional research articles:

* A Background (or introduction) section that identifies the issue and its significance, why it is something researchers and others do--or should--take an interest in (1 p.)
* A Methods section describing how you searched for and selected articles to review (1/2 p.)
* A Findings section in which you present information from the articles (2 1/2-3 pp.)
* A discussion section in which you give an overview of what is known about the topic and openings for further research into it (1-2 pp.)

Each section must be labeled.

All sources must be cited in APA format--or another format as appropriate to your field.  You may not cite in MLA style.

*Project Schedule*

On Tuesday, 3/12,  bring to class in hard copy a brief statement of the issue your review will focus on and why it is significant, and include a list of at least three works--cited in APA style--it will discuss.  This will count for 15% of your participation credit for the assignment.  You informally present your subject to the class.

By midnight on Friday, 3/15,  upload a planning grid for your review (format to be discussed in class) to the appropriate drop box on Blackboard.  This will count for 25% of your participation grade

Between 3/20-25, each of you will have an individual conference with my  in my office about your review essay.  Bring at least 3 pp. of a draft in progress.  The conference will count for 30% of your participation grade.

Bring a complete rough draft of your review essay in hard copy to class on 3/26.  The peer review will count for 30% of your participation grade.

Upload your revised draft of the review essay to the appropriate drop box by class time on 3/28 and bring the peer reviewed hard copy to class.