Essay #3 Directions:

English 101

Due Date: Three polished rough-draft copies are due on the day listed in the syllabus for peer evaluations. A final draft will be due later.

Length: This essay is to be 6-8 pages in length (if you use a large proportional font, about 1500-2000 words) not counting the Works Cited page. Accompanying this essay is a 1-2 page cover letter (see details below).

Format: The essay should be typed or word-processed on high quality paper (no onion-skin paper or semi-transparent bond paper, please). Aim for a professional appearance. The essay should be written in the Modern Language Association format (MLA). You may find it useful to peruse pages 102-14 of Diana Hacker's The Bedford Handbook, 6th edition for discussion of this format. Hacker includes a full example of this format on pages 113-14. NOTE: If you wish to eliminate the normal heading material in the upper left corner of the first page, you may do so in this final essay. Some audiences might treat your writing less seriously if they think your writing is simply "student work" rather than a thoughtful argument.

Double-space your essay and center the title of your composition. Be original. Be memorable. Make your title note. Note that the title of your own unpublished essay need not be underlined, italicized, or placed within quotation marks. Follow normal conventions for capitalization. (See Hacker pages 473-74.)

The body of your essay should be double-spaced and left justified rather than fully justified. Maintain one-inch margins all around the essay. On every page including the first, insert a header with your last name and the page number according to MLA format. By viewing "header" on most word-processors, you can set up your document to automatically include such a header on each page.

Reminder: (1) Grammar, mechanics, and neatness count. Because faulty grammar can lead to miscommunication, and sloppiness detracts from the essay's impact, grammar, mechanics, and neatness are in many ways inseparable from content. (2) Since you will probably use a word-processor, remember to use the spell-check but also proofread visually. Your paper should be completely free of spelling errors. (3) I will not accept papers that are not clipped or stapled together. Dog-eared copies together is unacceptable.

Special Directions: (1) Students have a week for revision, proofreading, and editing the rough draft. Therefore, I expect these essays to be free of grammatical errors and typos. (2) This essay is formal in tone. Writers should avoid informalities such as contractions, slang, unnecessary second person pronouns ("you"), and colloquial speech in favor of a professional tone. (3) Do note, however, that "formal" is not synonymous with "boring." Create a strong opening and strong conclusion. (4) This final essay is different from the previous major essays. It is worth 200 points rather than 100. It is longer than previous essays. It will also require a special cover letter and a stamped and addressed envelope. (See below.)

Selected Audience: Part of your task is to determine a real recipient for your argument--an individual, organization, or institution involved or concerned with your question-at-issue. This audience might be a local or state government official, an organization on campus, or even another writer with whom the student disagrees. Students in the past have sent their arguments to state representatives and urged them to use their governmental authority in support of a general policy; others have sent their arguments to leaders of professional organizations, businesses, or community activist groups. The ones who were most successful identified not only a specific audience, but determined what the audience could reasonably do to bring about change, and modified their argument for hostile or neutral audiences.

Cover Letter: Include a short cover letter attached to the front of the essay. The exact format of this letter is up to the student, but it should be a brief, polite, and formal. A suitable model might be the business letter in modified block format, as illustrated on page 116 of The Bedford Handbook. Whatever the format, the letter should explain to the audience why the audience should read the accompanying essay, why the author is particularly concerned about this issue, and why the research is relevant to the reader. Be sure to sign your name at the bottom of the letter. Note that using the pronoun "you" in a cover letter is perfectly appropriate--but might not be in the formal essay.

Stamped and Addressed Envelope: After reading through your essay and writing down your score, I will mail the essay to the individual you indicate on the envelope. You should submit your essay in an unsealed envelope labeled to a suitable recipient and stamped with sufficient postage to reach its destination. (You may need to get the package weighed at the post-office to determine the appropriate amount--be careful that the postal worker doesn't drop it into the mail before your teacher gets a chance to grade it.) If you wish to maintain a professional appearance, it would be wise to type the addresses on the envelope rather than handwriting them. Envelopes without sufficient postage will lose a letter grade--your teacher doesn't want to pay the postage on 60 essays. I will mail the argument after reading through it. If students want to reclaim a marked/graded version, they should present the teacher with an extra copy.

Essay #3: Researched Persuasive Argument

In this essay, students will identify a specific point of debate within the general topics discussed in class. They will create an argument concerning a course of action or change in policy, and address this argument to an individual or organization that has some say in the matter. All students will still need a unifying thesis to focus the essay. Students will need to cite their findings according to MLA standards and include a Works Cited page; examples can be downloaded from the class website under the "Research" link or perused in The Bedford Handbook. The student should incorporate any necessary invention techniques we have covered in class by the time of the final due date: exemplification, definition, classification, division, narration, description, process, or comparison/contrast. Of course, other techniques are welcome in addition to these, and they may be necessary to flesh out the paper.