**English 201: Literature Review Assignment**

**Important Dates:**

* Wednesday, Oct. 25: Work on rough draft in class
* Thursday, Oct. 26: Peer review in class
* Friday, Oct. 27: Final draft due uploaded to Canvas by 11:59 p.m.

**What is a Literature Review?**

According to “Writing the Literature Review” (<http://research.ewu.edu/c.php?g=53665>), “By writing a literature review, you are entering into an academic conversation about an issue. You need to show that you understand what research has already been done in your field and how your own research fits into it.”

**Why do we write a Literature Review?**

This assignment gives you practice in entering the academic conversation on the issue you are researching this quarter. This assignment gives you the opportunity to provide an overview of the relevant issues, problems, trends, or arguments that you have noted in the research articles on your topic. The review need not be exhaustive, but should feature the relevant scholarly research.

**How do you write a Literature Review?**

A successful literature review will summarize and discuss the research you have read about in six scholarly, peer-reviewed journal articles. To access this very specific type of article, you will need to search an EWU Library database such as *Academic Search Complete*, *ProQuest*, *JSTOR*, or a more discipline-specific database like *PsycINFO*, *Business Source Complete*, or other appropriate databases. A literature review is typically organized by topic, which can be difficult for first-time writers of this type of assignment, so you are encouraged instead to follow the instructions in the Instructions for Writing section of this assignment prompt.

**Important Requirements for this Assignment:**

* Word-processed, double-spaced, in Times New Roman font size twelve, with one-inch margins.
* Four (4) full pages or more, no less (-10% deduction per one half page for not meeting this basic minimum requirement). Make sure to use correct font and type size, correct line spacing and margins, and to write no less than four full pages. For a successful literature review, aim for four to six pages.
* Your review should provide an informative overview of six scholarly, peer-reviewed journal articles relevant to your research topic (the one you proposed in the article analysis/research topic proposal assignment). Your tone should be objective and analytical, with your focus on informing readers of the various important issues, topics, problems, trends, or arguments that you have noted in your sources.
* Write in MLA Style 8th Edition with in-text citations and a list of works cited at the end of the literature review to provide bibliographic information on all the sources cited in the review.
* Besides maintaining an objective, academic tone, be sure to use a clear, concise writing free of surface errors and typos. Budget enough time for editing and proofreading.
* Peer Review is required for this assignment: be sure to bring two copies to class on Thurs. Oct. 26

**Before writing:** Realize that scholarly journal articles are rich in information and can be difficult to read. Some articles pack as much information into ten pages as a book does in a hundred or more! Therefore, read journal articles with a strategy, as in this video tutorial: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EEVftUdfKtQ>

**Instructions for Writing:**

The format in this assignment will vary somewhat significantly from the type of literature review often found in scholarly journals in which a writer synthesizes a review topic by topic, which is not an easy task and often one that first-time literature reviewers find exceedingly difficult (you’re not just writing a new type of assignment but also reading some pretty complex articles, so let’s do what we can to make sure we’re all successful in this assignment!). Please follow the instructions for organizing your literature review listed below carefully:

* **Introduction:** The introduction should provide an initial overview of your subject as a whole, holding off on discussing any one specific scholarly article or other source at this point. At this point, develop an introduction that draws readers’ attention to the major issues that you have encountered in your research. To state your literature review’s controlling idea, inform readers what you think that your research so far has revealed about your subject. For example, such a sentence could look like this:
	+ A review of the articles in this literature review reveal the major issues in this subject to be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (fill in the blank)

OR

* + The major issues in the research appear to be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (fill in the blank with at least three or four major issues)
	+ You may of course devise your own sentence to state what the major issues are that your articles focus on.
* **Body of the Literature Review:** In the body of the assignment, focus on each of the six scholarly research articles in the following fashion:
	+ *Introduce the source* by identifying the author(s) and full title of the article and in which scholarly journal it was published, as in this example:
		- Deborah Rankin, Theo Baldwin, and Jean-Luc Gerond are the authors of “Waste Not, Want Not: A Longitudinal Study on the Uses of Garbage Collected in a Homeless Shelter in Buffalo, New York,” which was published in *Journal of Creative Uses of Garbage* in June, 2014. In this scholarly article, Rankin, Baldwin, and Gerond focus on…
	+ *Discuss what the source says about one or more of the major issues* that you identified in your literature review’s controlling idea (see “Introduction” above). Describe the researchers’ findings and focus on what you think should be important to readers to be able to understand and even discuss the issue(s) with people knowledgeable about the research topic. Focus on the findings of the writer(s) of your article, which you will typically find in the *discussion* section (it may also be called the *conclusion*): here the writer(s) will state their findings and recommendations, if any. If you find yourself bogged down in a section where the writer(s) cite many other researchers, move along to another section (what you’ve found is their literature review). We are interested in the findings, arguments, recommendations, etc. of the writer(s) of your research article.
	+ *Write at least a half page, double-spaced, on each of your six articles.*
* **Conclusion:**

One of the most important elements of a literature review is *synthesis*.

* In this final one to two paragraphs you should make a final point about the research, some observation about what you found in your research process and what it appears that the research suggests, as in this example:
	+ In sum, the research on this topic shows that homeless shelters can be more than warehouses for people in search of a warm bed and a meal, they can also play a role in teaching conservation skills and reducing waste.
* The conclusion may also point out if there is a gap in the research that you believe should be researched, or a topic that deserves more research than it has yet received, or if there is a need for action that the research appears to suggest.

**Assessment:** This assignment is worth 10% of the course grade, so be sure to turn in your best work. As I read and grade your literature review, I will consider the following key areas:

* **Organization and Content:** is your literature review clearly organized, with an introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion, with clear, logical transitions between ideas and paragraphs? Are paragraphs organized coherently, with a topic sentence, secondary support, and a transition/conclusion? Does the literature review provide a clear, organized overview of the research, discussing each of the six scholarly articles’ topics, themes, issues, problems, and/or arguments?
* **Summary, Discussion, and Analysis** of six scholarly journal articles relevant to your research topic and located in an EWU Library database: important: your sources MUST be scholarly and peer-reviewed.
* **Proofreading and Editing:** is your writing competently proofread for errors such as typos, spelling errors, or punctuation? Are you paying adequate attention to sentence lengths and variety, sentence construction and style, vocabulary, and word choices?
* **Use of MLA Style 8th Edition** to cite in-text and in a list of works cited.
* **Assignment Requirements:** is the writer following all the various requirements outlined in this assignment prompt and demonstrating satisfactory or better levels of applying knowledge required to do this assignment? Does the literature review provide an overview of six relevant, scholarly, peer-reviewed journal articles, focused on the student’s approved research topic?

Each of these criteria will be considered as follows:

Excellent Good Satisfactory Needs Work Unacceptable

Grades will consider all these criteria holistically and will be determined on the 0-4 scale and converted to a percentage. If, for example, the assignment is graded 3.2, the grade will be recorded on Canvas as 87%, which is a B+.

**How to Determine if a Source is a Scholarly Peer-Reviewed Journal Article:**

From Cornell Univ. Library: <http://guides.library.cornell.edu/c.php?g=31867&p=201759>

**Scholarly journals** **are also called academic, peer-reviewed, or refereed journals. Strictly speaking, peer-reviewed (also called refereed) journals refer only to those scholarly journals that submit articles to several other scholars, experts, or academics (peers) in the field for review and comment. These reviewers must agree that the article represents properly conducted original research or writing before it can be published.**

**What to look for?**

Scholarly journal articles often have an abstract, a descriptive summary of the article contents, before the main text of the article.

Scholarly journals generally have a sober, serious look. They often contain many graphs and charts but few glossy pages or exciting pictures.

Scholarly journals always cite their sources in the form of footnotes or bibliographies. These bibliographies are generally lengthy and cite other scholarly writings.

Articles are written by a scholar in the field or by someone who has done research in the field. The affiliations of the authors are listed, usually at the bottom of the first page or at the end of the article--universities, research institutions, think tanks, and the like.

The language of scholarly journals is that of the discipline covered. It assumes some technical background on the part of the reader.

The main purpose of a scholarly journal is to report on original research or experimentation in order to make such information available to the rest of the scholarly world.

Many scholarly journals, though by no means all, are published by a specific professional organization.

The chart in the following link from San Diego State University library may also help you distinguish between different types of sources: <https://library.sdsu.edu/reference/news/what-does-peer-review-mean>

**You will need six scholarly peer-reviewed journal articles for this assignment. If you are unsure if an article is scholarly or not, examine it using the information on this page.**