Paper 2 Assignment:
Synthesis Essay

Due Dates:
Mon 7/27 – Draft
Wed 7/29 – Final Paper
Length: about 5 pages
Format: Same as Narrative Essay

Understanding the Assignment

This is the first thesis-driven paper you will write for this class. In this unit, we’ll be focusing on structural and organizational aspects of writing, including thesis statements, topic sentences, and organization within paragraphs and on the whole-paper level.

In this unit, we will also begin to talk about synthesis and analysis, drawing connections and making judgments. As preparation, you’ve read about 3 genres that involve analysis and synthesis - Comparison & Contrast, Cause & Effect and Classification & Division - and read examples of each. They fit in the Structure and Organization unit because each asks you to organize information in a particular way. In addition, by practicing these forms, you will learn organizational techniques that are useful to a broad range of writing tasks. We will focus in particular on:

• brainstorming,
• thesis statements,
• structuring a thesis-driven paper, and
• paragraph structure.

Writing the Paper - Your 3 Tasks

1. Before Beginning to Write

1st Choose one of these Paper Prompts:

Cause & Effect: Examine how a specific historical event has had an impact upon you, via your family or your community. Explain how the event set in motion a series of choices on the part of people who came before you within family/community, leading to an impact upon you. Or explain multiple effects of the event, on you and members of your family/community. Try to include a variety of causes (main, contributory, immediate, remote…) in order to get a complex sense of causality. Be precise about the effect(s) and direct in your explanations of how cause and effect are related. Build to a larger understanding of your own contextualized identity (for example cultural identity, generational identity, race, class or gender identity…).

Comparison & Contrast: Compare and contrast two places where you have been that are related to one another in some way (perhaps by your relationship to them), or one place you’ve been at two different times, between which either the place or your perception of it changed. Describe each place so that the reader feels like s/he has been there by including details from several of the five senses, as well as a sense of the place’s history or character. Compare and contrast them in specific, meaningful and varied ways. Build to a larger understanding of the ‘world’ the place represents and/or yourself as spectator or participant in it.
Classification & Division: Develop a classification system to explain your teachers, past and/or present. You don't need to include them all, but you need 3 or more to do classification & division. Devise categories you can divide them into based upon specific variables: for example subjects taught; institution or level; teaching style, philosophy or pedagogy; the image they project, or their mode of address. You'll need to have at least 2 categories for each variable. (For example the variable Mode of Address might include three categories: Authoritative, Down Home and Inspired.) Be sure to describe the variables, categories and division system and to explain why you classified each teacher as you did. Build to a larger understanding of your own educational experience and/or the state/nature of education in the US or your home country.

Then reread the “Planning” and Structuring” sections of the chapter of Patterns for College Writing that goes with that genre/topic. Plan specific ways to use or adapt the techniques explained there to your paper. Record those plans in your Writer Reflection.

2. Drafting

Use the techniques described in “Planning” and “Structuring” (see above) to brainstorm and draft your paper. Pay close attention to the prompt and be sure your essay accomplishes the tasks it sets out.

Whichever form you are working with, your paper should have a thesis statement as well as introductory, body and conclusion paragraphs.

Strive to state your Topic + Point clearly and concisely at the beginning, then build paragraph upon paragraph logically so that when you return to your thesis in your conclusion, it has grown into something larger, more complex or more meaningful.

3. Revising and Editing

After you have finished drafting your Paper (but before you turn it in):

1st Reread your paper and this Assignment handout together, piece by piece. Make sure you have fully accomplished all the tasks, particularly those underlined or in boldface. Revise, tweak, perfect.

Then print out a draft – hard copy (due 7/27) bring 3 copies for Workshop.

Revise again after workshop. Print out another hard copy. On that hard copy, complete 2 proofreads in 2 different colored pens/pencils.

Proofread 1 is general: fix spelling, typos, etc.

For the 2nd proofreading, reread the “Revising” and “Editing” sections of the chapter that goes with your prompt/genre; use the 'checklists' to evaluate and improve your draft.

Finally, write a brief Writer Reflection describing your writing, revising and editing processes (about half a page; it can be hand written).

4. What to turn in (in the 2 pocket folder 7/29):

Pocket 1: Put your final paper on top. Behind that put your Writer Reflection, draft, outline and prewriting exercises you did in this unit.

Pocket 2: Paper 1 and all its extras. The originals with my comments!