Thesis Statements

For the paper assignment, you will be making a claim about your topic and justifying this claim with reasons and evidence. This claim must be a statement that reasonable people could disagree on, because the goal of your paper is to convince your audience that your claim is true based on your presentation of your reasons and evidence. A strong thesis statement will:

- take some sort of stand/position
- summarize the reasons/evidence that support this position

Requirements for the Paper Assignment

Your thesis statement must…

- begin with the phrase, “In this paper, I will argue…”
- be in your first paragraph.
- be 1-2 sentences in length.
- summarize all of the major points in your paper.
- present those points in the order that you discuss them in your paper.

Examples

From a paper on the “imperial presidency” readings:

In this paper, I will argue that the President of the United States does indeed possess far too much power and on many occasions oversteps his boundaries, especially during times of national crisis. I will demonstrate this through two examples: presidential signing-statements and the very porous War Powers Act.

From a paper on the role of the Internet in politics:

In this paper, I will argue that the Internet does, in fact, enhance political participation. I will show this by providing evidence that Internet use is becoming more widespread and that it has facilitated many successful political campaigns.
Sample Organization: Paper Assignment

I. Introduction [MUST BE NO MORE THAN ½ PAGE LONG]
   a. Introduce significance of subject matter
      i. Keep it brief
      ii. Avoid “Miss America” statements
   b. Thesis statement

II. Summary of articles (keep this VERY brief)
   a. Positions taken by authors
   b. Where authors agree

III. Major disagreement 1
   a. Position taken by author 1
   b. Position taken by author 2
   c. What outside evidence suggests that one author is more convincing

IV. Major disagreement 2
   a. Position taken by author 1
   b. Position taken by author 2
   c. What outside evidence suggests that one author is more convincing

V. Conclusion
   a. Restate thesis
   b. Summarize how you supported your argument
   c. Implications or other final thoughts