**Synthesis Essay Assignment**

**Purpose:** By this point in the term, you have read several essays about the ways in which media, technology, and business practices can work to impact our behaviors, health, worldview, and very identity. In this final paper, then, you will write an essay which brings together ideas and data from multiple sources to inform the audience about these issues.

Writing this essay will require you to 1) look for connections among the ideas in five assigned essays from *Inquiry*; 2) develop a thesis statement and main points which make an informative claim (based on the assigned essays’ content) in response to your research question; and 3) synthesize information from your sources to support and explain your main points. Your goal will be to effectively and accurately synthesize the source material in order to inform your audience. A secondary goal will be to integrate and document sources correctly.

**Topics:** Choose one of the following writing prompts:

- **Gender Projects: How Do We Learn (or Resist) Lessons in Gender?**
  
  If you decide on this topic, you will want to consider how our environment impacts our perceptions of gender. You might consider the perceptions that men and women have about themselves and one another, gender roles that are cultivated by society and often perpetuated by the media, definitions of femininity and masculinity (including definitions of characteristics, such as beauty, strength, power, and weaknesses). Once you have considered these various concerns, you might decide to narrow your topic to one of these components, or you might decide to cover multiple effects.

- **Business and Marketing: What Are Potential Effects of Our Consumption Practices?**
  
  If you select this topic, you will want to consider how business and marketing practices influence our decisions as consumers. Consider the potential impacts on our health, environment, worldview, identity, consumer habits, and education. Again, you might choose to focus on just one of these, or you might decide that you will need to discuss and explain multiple impacts.

**Content:**

- **Introduction:** Your introduction should follow the inverted triangle model in your textbook and should provide a context for the rest of your essay by providing some background of the cultural situation which has precipitated the “conversation” regarding the issue about which you’re writing. That is, it should lead us into the topic as well as provide a context for the topic by explaining the cultural problem to which the academic “conversation” is responding.

- **Thesis:** Your thesis statement should avoid making a persuasive opinionated claim, and instead should make an informative claim which represents the ideas you’ve encountered in your sources. It should acknowledge agreed upon components of the academic conversation but also
make mention of diverging views (when appropriate). You might use one of the following templates:

- Although scholars do not agree upon _____ minor informative claim_______, cultural critics largely agree that ________ major informative claim and main focus of your essay__________________________.
- Despite widespread agreement among cultural critics about _____ minor informative claim_______, they cannot agree upon ________ major informative claim and main focus of your paper ________.
- Cultural critics widely agree that ________________________ and all point to research which supports the belief that ________________________________.
- Cultural critics tend to agree that television programming and advertising have X impacts on women as they work together to present a view that women are__________, thereby causing ________.
- Scholars agree that through _________________________________, the media impacts children in_______________ manner.

**Body:** This section of your essay should provide any additional background necessary and should lay out the major claims in support of your thesis. Your goal here is NOT to merely summarize each of your sources. Instead, you need to have topic sentences which put forward a point and then use information from multiple sources to help explain and support that point. That is, your topic sentences will put forward overarching areas of agreement or contention you’ve seen across multiple sources (or conclusions about the issue you’ve come to through reading all of your sources), and your paragraph content should explain the topic sentence through providing your own discussion as well as information synthesized from your sources.

**Conclusion:** Your conclusion should bring appropriate closure to your essay, tying together the claims made in the body, reinforcing the thesis, and perhaps even commenting on the potential further-reaching implications of this issue for culture.

**Additional Content:** Either in the body or as part of the conclusion, you might choose to briefly explore issues, counterarguments, or implications the sources failed to address or overlooked.

**Source Requirements:** Refer to the “Topic Choices and Reading Assignments” handout.

**Documentation:** Your essay should follow MLA documentation guidelines, including source integration methods, in-text citations, and a Works Cited page.

**Formatting:** Please use twelve-point Times New Roman font, one-inch margins, and MLA formatting.

**Length:** 5-7 pages, double-spaced (not including the Works Cited page)