

AHSE 1150: What is “I”?

Professor Lynn Andrea Stein

Spring 2011

Assignment Three: Analytical Paper Draft, Commentary, and Revision

Oh, the joy of the analytical paper! How we envy you. (sigh)

Your first major paper for this course offers you a chance to create a thesis that analyzes two or more of our readings and to explore that thesis through a well-reasoned and well supported body of argument and evidence. In general, a thesis statement is your slant on a scholarly paper, a proposal of the question you will address, the answer you expect to find, and the process you will take.

This analysis paper must include:

- A strong introduction that lays out your goals, lists the main sources, states your thesis, and gives a hint of the process you will follow to address this thesis.
- A body that uses specific evidence from at least two course sources (properly cited with footnotes) to support and build your arguments. The organization of the central section is essential, so think carefully about the different points you wish to raise and the clearest order for these points.
- A conclusion that brings together the biggest “take home messages” from all portions of your argument and adds a final piece of analysis that explains the relevance of this topic and your findings (i.e., do more than repeat what you said earlier).

This assignment will unfold in four phases. We will discuss each phase in class and in lab prior to your work on it.

Phase Zero: Thesis/Proposal

- **Deadline:** February 24 at 11:59 PM by email to Lynn.
- **Length:** one paragraph or less. Follow the formatting guidelines above.
- **Content:** A thesis statement and an indication of the sources you intend to use to make your argument. (We will discuss this further in class.)
- **Collaboration:** you are welcome to discuss this with other students, but what is turned in should represent your own work. After all, you will be the one who has to write the paper!
- **Grade:** This will not impact your grade as long as it is done. OK, it also has to be done in a reasonably serious manner. Turning in last week’s Sunday Globe comics section will not pass muster here.

Phase One: Analytical Paper

- **Deadline:** March 7 at 11:59 PM by email to Lynn.

- Length: five to seven pages, formatted as described above.
- Collaboration: you are welcome to receive editorial assistance from other students (particularly the writing tutors!) for this paper. Acknowledge all assistance that you receive in a note at the end of the paper. If you do not receive assistance, you're being incredibly foolish. Acknowledge this (the lack of assistance, not the foolishness) explicitly by writing "I did not receive assistance from anyone on this assignment" in a note at the end of the paper.
- Grade: (together with Phase Three, Revision) 30% of your grade.

This paper will be assessed according to a rubric to be distributed. Last year's version (which will be revised for this year but will hit most of the same points) contained four categories: Composition, Organization, Analysis, and Use of Evidence/Support. These are described further in Phase Two.

Phase Two: Commentary on Colleague's Paper

- Deadline: MARCH 10 in lab (bring a copy on paper) and emailed to Lynn by 11:59 PM
- Length: four to six pages, formatted as described above.
- Collaboration: none! Do it entirely on your own.
- Grade: 10% of your grade

This assignment requires you to read your colleague's paper and write a response that explains the effect it had upon you and offers an assessment. This should provide the kind of feedback that allows your classmate to significantly improve his/her paper, so please be as thorough and thoughtful as possible.

Your commentary can take the form of a series of unconnected paragraphs that address the following topics. In other words you do not have to write this commentary as a single coherent paper. Your commentary must include all of the following categories (feel free to use the numbers and titles below) but not necessarily a response to every single question. (You may also find it helpful to use the rubric distributed for the paper.)

1. Summary. What is the thesis (in your own words) and what are the arguments and evidence that support the thesis. No more than one paragraph, please!
2. Composition. How would you characterize the writing in this paper? Clear? Confusing? Persuasive? Opinionated? Eloquent? Basic? Did you agree with sentence lengths, grammar usage, and word choices? Can you single out any errors or inconsistencies in the writing? If this is well written, can you explain why or give an example of something that works?
3. Organization. When you read this paper, how would you title the main sections? Are these sections clear and self-evident or did you find yourself wondering why one paragraph followed the next? Did the introduction offer a road map or overview of the paper that captures both the narrative and analysis? Did the body of the paper live up to the introduction and carry out its mandate? Did different sections contain transitions that helped you step through the argument and narrative?
4. Analysis. Does the thesis represent an interesting and significant argument or is it merely a statement of fact? Was the thesis clear? Did each section of the paper contribute something to the exploration and development of this thesis (this is also an

- organizational issue)? Was the logic and argument convincing to you? Did you find this paper perceptive and thoughtful?
5. Evidence. Does the author support the analysis with sufficient evidence from multiple sources? Is the evidence relevant to the thesis? Is the evidence used in a correct manner, consistent with your understanding of the source? Does the paper include sufficient background information?
 6. Overall Effectiveness. Did this paper educate you? How would you characterize your overall reaction to it? What were its strongest and weakest aspects? What would you do differently?

Phase Three: Revision of Paper

- Deadline: March 17 at 11:59 PM
- Length: five to seven pages
- Collaboration: you are welcome to receive editorial assistance from other students (particularly the writing tutors!) for this paper, and of course you will have feedback from a classmate. Acknowledge all assistance that you receive in a note at the end of the paper.
- Grade: (together with Phase One, Analytical Paper) 30% of your grade. Note that you will be graded on the same standards as Phase One and in addition the criterion of Responsiveness to Feedback/Improvement on Revision. You are not expected to uncritically adopt all feedback provided, but you should learn from what is said and respond appropriately. In addition, any piece of writing can be improved and your revision should demonstrate your ability to do so.

Based on your classmate's comments and any other feedback that you may have received, revise your paper and resubmit it. If you receive feedback that you do not incorporate into your paper, you may also include a brief explanation of why you chose to disregard this feedback.