Neighborhood Research Project Overview

For your final essay, you will need to investigate one issue or challenge in your local neighborhood. Perhaps you’ll want to look at gang violence, beach erosion, closing of parks, discrimination in school, overuse of pesticides in gardens; loud neighbors, unpaved roads, unsafe bus stops… the options are never-ending.

First you will need to write a partial history that lets us know about the event in the history of your neighborhood. In other words, if you look at tragic serial murders at Gilgo you’ll want to tell us all about Gilgo. Where is it, how it got its name, when did it become part of the town beach system, what kind of access is available to patrons etc? You can discuss several versions or histories that give us background information on the problem you’re going to highlight.

You will also include your own personal experience with this issue. Why is it important to you?

This project will involve a research. Your research will be quite different, depending on the writing idea you choose. You could be one source, but you will need more sources than just you. A mixture of sources would be good—letters, song lyrics, radio broadcasts, interviews, advertisements or commercials, photos—perhaps, brochures. While you may use one internet resource and one book (no more), I don’t want you to become dependent on research that excludes talking to people. Using a variety of sources, three to five people at the very least, will assure you write this from multiple perspectives. Be sure to acknowledge and articulate perspectives and biases that you come across in your research.

Finally, your project will include a discussion of your own ideas/suggestions for solving the problem, or addressing the issue on which your paper is based. These should be educated, informed suggestions.

You need to use at least 3 human being sources (interviews) for this project, as well as at least five other sources (newspaper articles, legislation, opinion pieces, film, archival research, and so on) and you must include updated MLA in-text citations and a works cited page. Make sure you write this project in a way that distinguishes the various points of view while presenting the history of your neighborhood and one problem you see occurring in it.

You will also write this paper to a specific audience. For example, if you are writing about the impact of parks near your home closing, you would find out who owns the park—your town? your county? your state?—and write to either your appropriate legislator, or the person who is in charge of parks for that entity.

All papers must be at least 2500 words, double-spaced with standard margins and use a 12-point Times New Roman font. Please keep in mind that anything other than this format will be unacceptable.

As you know from reading our course syllabus, we will approach this project in many small steps. It is important that you keep up with each of the steps in order to write a solid paper at the end of the semester.