

## Unit 3: Researched Argument Essay

“Academic writing is often described as a kind of conversation.... [T]he goal of such writing is not to have the final word on a subject, to bring the discussion to a close, but to push it forward, to say something new, something that seems to call for further talk and writing.”

—Joseph Harris, *Rewriting* (35-6)

In unit 1, you read texts related to the broad topic of Everyday Representations of Dis/Ability and began to get a sense for the concepts and issues and arguments and history of disability. The purpose of our first writing assignment was to recognize and respond to the projects of other writers through critical summary and to move toward a research focus of your own. In unit 2, you refined your research questions and collected and carefully evaluated a small selection of secondary sources using rhetorical analysis.

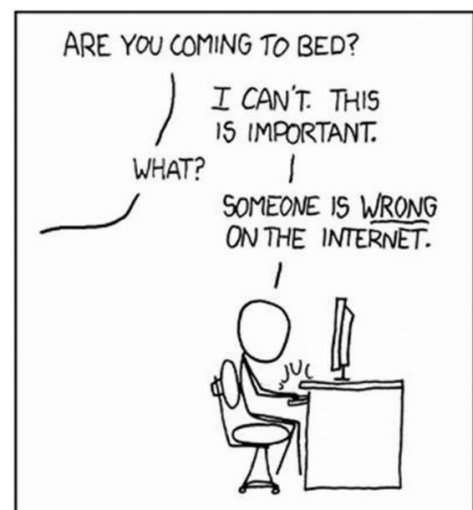
In unit 3, you will write a researched argument, drawing on the sources you have been reading & analyzing. You'll position yourself in relation to the topic or an issue you've been studying and build a case for understanding or action. The essay is not a research report; **it requires you to take an explicit position in relation to your topic, to analyze and complicate your topic, and to use your sources sparingly but strategically.** This essay is your opportunity to assert your thinking about your research topic. You'll practice using other sources—illustrating, authorizing borrowing and extending—to forward your own ideas. It may help to think about it in the way Harris offered, as a part of a conversation where you are offering your perspective in relation to others you have been learning about from your sources. You will make a case for a particular way of seeing your topic in relation to what others in the academic conversation have to offer.

To help you prepare for this essay, we will focus on arguing effectively, locating and integrating primary research, and engaging critically and ethically with sources.

### Source Requirements.

In order to provide a diverse range of perspectives on your topic, you will need to locate and use a range of sources:

1. **Three secondary sources** that offer an interpretation or argument about your topic or issues related to your topic. At least one must be a peer-reviewed scholarly source.
2. **One secondary source** that provides historical context. **(optional)**
3. **Primary research** specific to your topic:  
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/559/1/>



The opposite of academic argument (xkcd.com)

## Attention to Rhetorical Issues.

Just as we practiced rhetorical awareness with the sources located in unit 2, we will continue to address rhetorical issues and deploy rhetorical awareness as we research and write our own projects. Specifically, in class and in your paper, I expect you to do the following:

- **Assert** why your issue interests you or matters to you (and why it should interest and matter to your readers) at this particular historical moment. In other words, compose your argument *kairotically* and establish exigence.
- **Recognize** and attend to what your readers will need in terms of explanation, preparation, contextualization. You will want to do the following:
  - define key terms and concepts,
  - carefully introduce your sources,
  - anticipate confusion or resistance,
  - use rhetorical appeals and strategies appropriate for your rhetorical situation, and
  - anticipate counter-arguments.
- **Argue** a particular perspective; that is, be explicit about how your ideas fit into the ongoing debate/conversation—synthesize.

## The Nitty Gritty.

The unit 3 researched argument essay should be 6-8 pages, 12 pt. font, double-spaced, and formatted according to MLA guidelines. The essay should reflect your perspective, your voice, and an active, engaged presence. Please include a Works Cited page and appropriate title. The final essay is due on **Monday, April 8th**.