



WRIT 101 Inquiry Project 1

Listen, Then Tell Us What You Heard: The Personal Academic Essay

As you have read in your text, a foundational principle of studying rhetoric is learning to listen rhetorically. For this first major inquiry assignment, you will practice listening as you pursue answers to your own research question about Montana, Missoula, or UM. You will learn how to ask a quality research question, conduct academic research, integrate and cite resources, and synthesize research with your own personal experience and ideas, as well as effectively combine your personal experience and academic research.

Your purpose in this essay is not to find the answer to your question. Indeed, if you can find “the answer” then you have not asked a quality research question. Your purpose is to explore opinions and ideas in order to enter an academic conversation (between you, experts from your research, and others who may be interested). You may come to conclusions at the end, you may come only to more complicated questions. Either way, you are not building an argument with your research; you’ll do that in project two.

Final draft and required materials due **Thursday, Feb. 27 at the start of class.**



Assignment and Goals

Write a 6- to 8-page (1,500 to 2,000 words, including *Works Cited* page) personal academic essay in response to a specific research question of your choosing about Montana, Missoula, or UM; topic must allow you to engage on a personal level and use academic research. Your essay should:

- Clearly address a specific research question of personal interest
- Combine personal experience and quality academic research
- Pursue even tentative conclusions by the end
- Breathe; it should have a professional but personal tone, not a stuffy one like Encyclopedia Britannica. It should use first-person voice (“I,” “me,” “we”). If you choose a topic of interest to you, this comes easier.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the complexity of the issues at hand
- Quote, paraphrase, and summarize ideas and language from research with appropriate introduction
- Use MLA style for all quotations, citations, and works cited
- Distinctively show revision from earlier drafts
- Be written gracefully with text that is free of grammar or punctuation errors



Required Drafts and Artifacts

Turn in:

1. Revised and highly polished draft (formatted per requirements for homework)
2. One piece of invention work
3. All research journals/logs
4. Workshop worksheets from peers
5. First full draft (draft one)



Evaluation

I will give you comments and a check-system mark rather than a letter grade.