

## Evaluating Controversies - 200 points

### **Purpose:**

1. To analyze a range of sources and evaluate for credibility, angle, scope, authoritativeness.
2. To explain a range of research approaches and to assess according to rhetorical contexts.
3. To construct an argument with thorough and nuanced support that acknowledges the concerns of audience and synthesizes sources appropriately.
4. To develop a nuanced and thoughtful conclusion based on their evaluation of relevant sources.
5. To support their conclusion with ample and appropriate evidence.

**Task:** Students will select a currently controversial topic, event, or issue from a list provided by the instructor. They will locate three to four sources with varied viewpoints and evaluate sources using the CRAP (currency, reliability, authority, purpose /point of view) criteria in order to determine one (1) of the following:

- What caused this event? (For example, the Parkland School Shooting)
- What really happened? (For example, the Trayvon Martin killing)
- What is currently happening? (For example, climate change)

Students will then develop a five to seven-page argument based on their evaluation of sources. Sources should be non peer-reviewed or popular sources, e.g., newspaper articles, blog posts, podcasts, magazine articles, because of our focus on critical thinking and source evaluation.

### Controversial Topics

- |                                  |                                |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • Kavanaugh hearings/appointment | • Russian hacking              |
| • Bitcoin/Cryptocurrencies       | • Presidential twitter account |
| • Sanctuary cities               | • North Korea                  |
| • Memorials                      | • Iran nuclear deal            |
| • Anti-fa/Alt-right Movements    | • College campus protests      |
| • Executive orders               | • Hate speech/Free speech      |
| • Fracking                       | • #MeToo                       |
| • #HimToo                        | • Keystone Pipeline            |

### **Audience:**

To be determined by the author as part of the assignment; however, this will be determined as part of the drafting and planning process.

### **Key Terms:**

*CRAP Source Evaluation, Criteria, Balanced and Fair Assessment*

### **Definitions:**

- An *evaluation* in an academic setting should be developed after constructing criteria, rather than attempting to develop reasons for an already decided judgment. In this way, students will be making cognitive moves important to writing a thesis-driven evaluation.

- *Balanced and fair assessment*, based on the *criteria*, allows nuance or shades-of-gray argument strategies. Few evaluations, especially in scholarly work, should or can be without nuance. For example, a movie may have spectacular visuals but a tired and clichéd plot. A thoughtful movie critic will craft an evaluation that takes note of this disparity and makes an argument in which their preferred criterion weights the evaluation in one direction or another.

**Overview of the unit process:**

Pre-writing and gateway activities

Peer Review Draft Due Monday 11/28

Final Draft Due Friday 12/7

**Assignment Form:**

MLA Standard Format

**Assignment Weight:**

20% of final grade

**Evaluative Criteria:**

1. CRAP Sources (70 points): Clear, analytical thesis statement; identification of rhetorical strategies; and understanding of chosen text.
2. Organization (45 points): An engaging introduction and thoughtful conclusion; smooth transitions and a purposeful ordering of information.
3. Evidence/Support (40 points): Clear use of and engagement with textual/rhetorical support; proper citations with an MLA-formatted Works Cited page.
4. Word Choice/Language (35 points): Appropriate tone and attention to audience; purposeful and mature diction.
5. Grammar/Mechanics (10 points): Proper punctuation and spelling; sentence fluency