**Synthesis Paper**

This semester, we have considered complex issues surrounding media literacy. We discussed the reliability of online information, the impact of social media use on mental health, the connection between social media and activism, and the prevalence of online scams. Use those conversations and readings to help you consider possible topics for further investigation. Additionally, Chapters 8-12 in *The Writers Loop* focus on research strategies. These chapters introduce how to best evaluate, summarize, and integrate sources. Use these chapters of your text to help with managing your sources for this assignment.

For the Synthesis Paper, you will bring together ideas and data from multiple sources to inform your audience about a topic related to our course theme of media literacy. The synthesis paper will require you to 1) look for connections among the ideas presented in six sources of your choosing; 2) develop a thesis statement and topic sentences which make an informative claim in response to a research question; and 3) synthesize information from your sources to support and explain your main points. Your two goals will be to effectively and accurately synthesize the source material to inform your audience and to ethically integrate and document source information.

**As you approach this assignment, follow these steps:**

- Brainstorm possible topics and develop to a research question. See the examples below:
    - *How do professionals treat social media addiction?*
    - *How does social media create opportunities for activism?*
- Use online search engines and the library data bases to locate at least six different sources related to your research question. At least one source should be a peer reviewed, academic journal article.
- Read and annotate those sources.
- As you read, look for connections between the sources. Consider these questions:
    - *Where do they agree?*
    - *Where do they disagree?*
    - *Do they cite the same experts?*
    - *Which sources make the strongest arguments?*
    - *What limitations do you find?*
- Summarize and evaluate each source to create a Synthesis Matrix (more about this in a separate assignment sheet).
- Formulate a thesis. Remember you will make an *informative claim about your sources* rather than offer a persuasive claim about the topic.
- Begin drafting the body of your paper.
- Attend an instructor conference (10/24-10/26).
- Submit Synthesis Matrix (10/27).
- Submit a draft for peer review (11/1).
- Complete reviews of peers' drafts (11/3).
- Make revisions in response to peer and instructor feedback.
- Submit your final draft (11/15).

**Be sure to include the following:**
- A thoughtful **introduction** that begins with a hook and transitions to a **thesis statement** that offers an informative claim about the sources. See examples below:
    - *Although experts do not always agree upon how to address and treat social media addiction, they largely agree that social media use can lead to addictive behaviors.*
- At least four **body paragraphs** that contain **topic sentences** and concrete **supporting details** from the sources.
    - Be sure to provide context (background information) for your topic.

- o Do not just summarize each source.
- o Begin each body paragraph with a topic sentence and use information from multiple sources and your own discussion to explain that point.
- o Each topic sentence will identify an overarching point of agreement (or disagreement) within your larger claim.
- An appropriate **conclusion** that reinforces your claim and leaves the reader thinking about the implications of this issue.

**Format**: You will turn in both a rough draft and a final draft for this assignment. <u>Your paper should be five pages long</u>, formatted using MLA guidelines, typed using MSWord or Google Docs, and saved as a Word Doc or PDF (please do not save as a Pages doc or html**). First, you will upload your draft to Achieve for peer review before class 11/1**. If possible, bring your laptop to class that day so that we can complete the peer review workshop together. I will also review your drafts. Based on the feedback you receive, make revisions and **upload your final draft to D2L by 11:59p, 11/15.**

| CRITERION* | EXCELLENT | GOOD | SATISFACTORY | WEAK | FAILING |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Context of and Purpose for Writing (****Communication Skills)* <br> Does the essay demonstrate an understanding of the assignment's rhetorical concepts (purpose, audience, genre, context)? | | | | | |
| ***Content Development*** *(Critical Thinking Skills)* <br> Does the essay present a critically considered topic? <br> Does the essay develop a comprehensive synthesis of information? <br> Does the essay present varying viewpoints? <br> Does the essay provide a logical conclusion? | | | | | |
| ***Genre and Disciplinary Conventions*** <br> *(Communication Skills)* <br> Does the essay assert a position in a thesis statement placed at the end of the introduction? <br> Does the essay provide body paragraphs that begin with a topic sentence, focus on one idea, and include several examples and details? <br> Does the essay successfully execute stylistic choices? | | | | | |
| ***Sources and Evidence*** *(Personal Responsibility Skills)* <br> Does the essay follow MLA guidelines for in-text citations and the Works Cited page? <br> Does the essay use sources in ethical and contextually appropriate ways? | | | | | |
| ***Control of Syntax and Mechanics*** *(Communication Skills)* <br> Does the essay use a variety of sentence types and precise language? <br> Does the essay contain few grammatical or mechanical errors? | | | | | |
| ***Comments:*** | | | | | |

# Synthesis Paper Checklist

_____ Header

- Last name
- Page number
- Upper right-hand corner of every page

_____ Double-spaced (no extra space between heading and title)

_____ Heading

- Student Name
- Instructor Name
- Course Title
- Date
- At left margin on first page only

_____ Title

- Centered on first page only

_____ Hook

- Grabs the reader's attention at the beginning of intro

_____ Thesis Statement

- Last sentence of the intro
- Makes an informative claim about the source information

_____ Main Idea/Topic sentence (for each body paragraph)

- Each body paragraph begins with a topic sentence
- Illustrates the paragraph's main idea
- Offers one reason in support of the thesis

_____ Evidence (for each body paragraph)

- Concrete evidence from sources (quote, summary, paraphrase)

_____ Analysis/Discussion (for each body paragraph)

- Original, thoughtful discussion about the evidence and how the sources connect (agree or disagree)

_____ Signal Phrases

- Source information is introduced with a phrase to provide context: A recent _New York Times_ article suggests,

_____ In-text Citations

- Each quote, summary, or paraphrase includes a citation in parenthesis
- Citation includes the author's last name and page number – no comma, no p./pp./pg. (Smith 131).

_____ Thoughtful Conclusion

- Leaves the reader with something to consider

_____ Works Cited Page

- Lists all sources cited within the paper (at least 4 sources)
- Sources are listed in alphabetical order according to the first word of the entry (usually the author's last name)
- All publication information is listed in the correct order
- Review textbook appendix A.2, OWL Purdue, or library database for assistance

_____ Sentence Sense

- Proofread for fragments, comma splices, and run-ons
- Avoid sentences that begin with _There are_ or _It is_
- Use clear and concise sentences
- Use strong verbs

_____ Agreement

- Proofread for pronoun agreement (number and gender) and case
- Proofread for subject/verb agreement (singular subjects take singular forms of the verb/plural subjects take plural forms of the verb)

_____ Polish

- Proofread for capitalization, spelling, and word choice errors

# Synthesis Matrix

Name:

Research Question:


Synthesis Matrix

|  | Source 1: | Source 2: | Source 3: | Source 4: | Source 5: | Source 6: |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Main Idea A |  |  |  |  |  |  |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Main Idea B | | | | | |
| Main Idea C | | | | | |
| Main Idea D | | | | | |

| Conflicting Ideas/Additional Notes | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | |