University of California, Irvine

Assessment of Writing in

the First-Year Integrated Program

2006-2007

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Introduction

The purpose of this report is to present findings related to a formative assessment of student writing in courses taught as part of the First-Year Integrated Program (FIP). FIP is a year-long multi-disciplinary experience for new students that helps students partially fulfill general education requirements, including the second course of the lower division writing requirement. Two courses were approved for the first year of the Program (2006-07):

- University Studies 11: Persuasion and Social Change, taught by faculty from German, Comparative Literature, and Sociology.
- University Studies 12: Computer Games as Art, Culture and Technology, taught by faculty from Information and Computer Science, Informatics, and Film and Media Studies.

As part of its approval of FIP, the Council on Educational Policy requested that the writing component of the program be reviewed at the end of the first year. The writing assessment reported here is in response to that request.

Key Findings

Using both direct and indirect measures of student writing, this study suggests that a sizeable portion of students enrolled in the First-Year Integrated Program achieved the intended writing objectives of the program. Students' own self-assessments of their writing skills and abilities improved steadily over all three quarters, indicating that students detected significant gains in their writing. The two direct assessments of student writing -- the one-page essays and the capstone papers -- confirmed that students made progress in their writing skills and also exposed the need for more intentional writing prompts and writing instruction that is consistent across time and courses, yet reflective of the distinctive approaches of the various academic disciplines engaged in FIP courses. The use of the assessment matrix, first developed as a joint project of WR 39C and HCC 1C courses, and revised based on the recommendations outlined in that project report, demonstrates its usefulness for the assessment of FIP capstone courses and for the identification of writing strengths and weaknesses of both the students and the curriculum.

Writing Assessment Plan

Since this was the first year that the courses had been taught, a formative assessment plan was developed to assess the quality of student writing. Formative assessment, in contrast to summative assessment, involves the collection and analysis of information for the primary purpose of improving a program during its developmental, or formative, stages. The assessment plan included one indirect measure of student writing (quarterly surveys) and two direct measures (one-page essays and the capstone writing paper). The assessment plan was designed to answer three questions:

1. To what extent do students perceive that their writing skills have improved as a result of the course?
2. To what extent do students' one-page essays demonstrate increasing levels of fluency and better variety of word choice?
3. To what extent do students' capstone papers demonstrate the presence of writing traits that are expected of writing that satisfies the second course of the lower division writing requirement?

To answer these questions, the following assessment methods were selected:

1. Students' self-reported gains in writing, collected at the end of each quarter (indirect measure);

2. Collection and analysis of one-page essays, written at the beginning of each quarter (direct measure) using a computer program that measures fluency and use of academic vocabulary; and,
3. Analysis of a random sample of capstone papers (direct measure) using a revised version of the assessment matrix developed and used by writing directors of Writing 39C and Humanities Core Course 1C (courses that satisfy the second course of the lower division writing requirement).

Student Enrollments

Student enrollment in each FIP course was capped at 80 students; however, neither course met this initial target. In addition, both courses lost some enrollment across the three quarters. US11 started with 47 students (Fall 2006) and ended with 33 students (Spring 2007). Similarly, US12 started with 61 students and ended with 50 students. Follow-up telephone calls with students who did not re-enroll indicated a variety of reasons for not continuing in the courses including concerns over course workload, organization and content not meeting expectations, scheduling conflicts, and difficulties in committing to a three-quarter sequence. Only one student (in US12) cited academic problems as a reason for not continuing.

When compared to other first-year (freshmen) students, FIP students had significantly better SAT Verbal and Math scores. In addition, students enrolled in US11A had higher SAT Writing scores than US12A students. And, not surprisingly, students enrolled in US12A had higher SAT Math scores than US11A students.

Among US11 students, 21 (45%) were Undecided/Undeclared and 15 (32%) had a declared major in Humanities, Social Sciences, or Social Ecology. In US12, 21 (34%) of students had a declared major in Information and Computer Science and 14 (23%) were Undecided/Undeclared.

Writing Instruction

Each of the FIP courses approached writing instruction and writing assignments in their own way. In addition, the amount of writing required varied between the two courses. The following summary indicates how course content and assignments varied by quarter. These distinctions become especially important when reviewing students' self-assessment of learning gains.

US 11: Persuasion and Social Change
- Fall Quarter explored how the concept of rhetoric takes shape across media such as the work of Plato, Greek plays, and the Internet. Students were required to produce eight one-page blogs and a two-page essay. They also engaged in regular email Q & As from the TAs and other class members, and engaged in a peer review process for each formal essay assignment.
- Winter Quarter students examined the notion of conversion through such varied works as Augustine's Confessions, The Autobiography of Malcolm X, and Darwin's Origin of Species. Students were required to compose two essays, to research and construct an annotated bibliography of sources on one topic, and to engage in a peer review process for each formal essay assignment.
- Spring Quarter explored the themes of law and resistance and the relationship between law and rhetoric through the events of the Civil Rights Movement, the Vietnam War, 9/11 and the War on Terror, with students writing one three to four page paper as well as their capstone research paper. Again, students engaged in a peer review process for the short essay, and joined peers in the selection of topics and the review of the research essays composed in fulfillment of the research paper requirement.

US 12: Computer Games as Art, Culture and Technology
- Fall Quarter tackled general concepts in computer games and required students to learn the basics of Java programming and to develop a game. Students were also required to write two academic essays, with required bibliographic references, and to engage in peer review. All students also completed an in-class written examination.
- Winter Quarter explored computer games both as works of art and political or social expressions through an examination of non-commercial computer games designed as art or as critiques of computer games. Students researched computer games as art, constructed an annotated bibliography assessing sources on the topic selected, composed a 1200-1500 word capstone research paper, and engaged in peer review of both the annotated bibliography and the final research project. Students were also required to become familiar with Second Life, a computer program which served as an example of a computer game platform with social and political implications.
- Spring Quarter focused on gaming criticism, the elements that make computer games unique, and a more in-depth look at the elements needed to construct a computer game. Students worked in groups and were required to write a more sophisticated game that, if they chose, was an extension of the prototype they had developed in the Fall. Students were required to produce a professional quality design document which is a report about the construction and implementation of the computer game each group created. A Design Document is comprised of the following elements: an abstract, introduction, description of the game, description of the art and concepts, detailed instructions about how the game was written, and a link to a demonstration of an actual game module. Group members also had to construct a 250 word critique analyzing their work in the group, the contributions of each group member, and assessing what they learned.

The FIP Writing Director provided instructional guidance to TAs on how best to integrate writing assignments into the discussion of researching and evaluating the power and presence of computer games in culture, and how to assign, conduct peer review, comment on and make a formal assessment of student writing for each essay assigned throughout the year. The Director met weekly with the TAs to teach formal pedagogical approaches to writing and research and to help TAs explore ways to integrate writing with course content, to develop and use scoring rubrics, and to involve students in the assessment of their own writing.

Assessment Results

1. Self-Assessment of Writing (Surveys)

At the end of each quarter, students were asked to complete a course evaluation survey which included items asking students' to evaluate their own improvement in writing. The first set of survey items were taken from the course learning objectives articulated by the faculty on the course websites, and the second set of items were developed by the evaluators as being appropriate for FIP courses.

Results from the quarterly surveys showed that students' self-assessments of their writing skills improved over time. Of the five survey items administered to US11 students, four showed steady improvement over the three quarters (see Table 1). Other findings indicated that

- over 80% of the US11 students reported that their skills in expressing themselves in writing and their ability to evaluate and integrate sources into their writing had improved as a result of taking the course;
- over 95% of the US11 students agreed that the writing skills had improved; and,

- all US11 students (100%) agreed that the writing assignments helped to develop their writing skills.

The one anomaly was the small percentage of US11 students in Fall Quarter (only 48%) who agreed with this statement: "As a result of this course, I am learning how to write more persuasively." Several reasons come to mind for the low percentages, but it's not known exactly how students' interpreted the question. Perhaps students felt that their persuasive writing was strong when they entered they course and as strong at the end of fall quarter, thus showing "no improvement". Another hypothesis is that students were highly self-critical of their own writing in the first quarter and did not see much improvement during that time. In any event, it is reassuring to find that the percentages increased to 90% during Winter and Spring quarters, which confirms that most students agreed that they were learning to how to write more persuasively.

Table 1. Self-Assessment of Writing in US11

Survey Items	Percent Agreement [a]		
	Fall 2006	Winter 2007	Spring 2007
Course Learning Objectives			
As a result of this course, I am learning how to write more persuasively.	48%	91%	100%
As a result of this course, my writing skills are improving.	100%	95%	96%
General Writing Skills			
My skills in expressing myself through writing (papers, writing exams, etc.) have improved.	81%	91%	97%
My ability to evaluate and integrate sources into my writing has improved as a result of this course.	NA[b]	86%	96%
The writing assignments helped me to develop my writing skills.	NA[b]	100%	100%

[a] Percent agreement is based on a 4-point response scale: 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) agree, and 4) strongly agree. The results displayed represent the percentage of students that agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.
[b] Items marked N/A were not included that quarter.

Table 2 displays the self-reported writing gains associated with US12. In this course, students' levels of agreement improved or remained steady across quarters for 5 of the 7 survey items. On the other 2 items, the highest percentages of students agreeing occurred in Winter Quarter. Perhaps the higher ratings in Winter Quarter are in part a reflection of their focus on their capstone papers which were composed in Winter Quarter. Other results indicated that

- 77% of the US12 students agreed that their writing skills improved as a result of the course;
- 80% of the US12 students agreed that they had made improvements in their ability to convey their thesis and opinions in fluent, well-organized sentences and paragraphs (one of the course objectives); and,
- 74-83% of the US12 students agreed that the writing assignments helped them develop their writing skills.

Table 2. Self-Assessment of Writing in US12

Survey Items	Percent Agreement [a]		
	Fall 2006	Winter 2007	Spring 2007
Course Learning Objectives			
I have improved my ability to summarize an argument made by another writer.	69%	75%	78%
I improved my ability to construct a thesis supported by sophisticated claims.	74%	73%	74%
I have improved my ability to provide sufficient evidence to support such claims.	66%	84%	79%
I have improved my ability to convey my thesis and opinions in fluent, well-organized sentences and paragraphs.	75% [b]	76%	80%
General Writing Skills			
My skills in expressing myself through writing (papers, writing exams, etc.) have improved.	66%	77%	77%
My ability to evaluate and integrate sources into my writing has improved as a result of this course.	NA [c]	82%	77%
The writing assignments helped me to develop my writing skills.	NA	75%	85%

[a] Percent agreement is based on a 4-point response scale: 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) agree, and 4) strongly agree. The results displayed represent the percentage of students that agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.
[b] Only 8 out of 57 survey respondents completed this item.
[c] Items marked N/A were not included that quarter.

Results from both courses suggest that students perceived an improvement in their writing skills over the three quarters. When reviewing the results by course, it is important to remember the different approaches to writing taken by each course, the nature of the academic disciplines the courses represented, and that students enrolled in these courses were different in terms of their academic interests and abilities. Together these differences likely influenced the ways in which students experienced the courses and reflected on their writing skills.

2. One-Page Essays

As part of the evaluation plan, FIP students were required to write a one-page, diagnostic essay during the third week of each quarter. The primary purpose of the essays was to generate a short piece of writing at three stages during the year which could be used to assess improvements in writing. US12 students completed their one-page essays during the discussion session, while US11 students were allowed to work on their essays for the rest of the day (turning them in by midnight of the day their received the prompt). This is an important distinction for analyzing the results presented in this section. In both courses, the writing prompts were developed by the course instructional teams in consultation with the FIP Writing Director, and given to students during their discussion session in the third week of the quarter.

Table 3: Writing Prompts for One-Page Essays,
Administered at the Start of Each Quarter

US11, Persuasion and Social Change	US12, Computer Games as Art, Culture and Technology
Fall Quarter	
Rhetorical Event: _____ 1. Describe the rhetorical event completely (When was it given? Who was the target audience? Why was it given?) 2. What was the event's effect on you? 3. Why? What about the event, or you, contributed to its effectiveness (or non-effectiveness)?	At the end of *The Origin of the Species*, Poole asks two rhetorical questions. But how closely can certain videogames every hope to recreate from the real world; and how does another sort of videogame, one that is built around a purely fantastic world, persuade us that it is in some sense real? Respond to those questions. You don't necessarily have to answer them; you might, for instance, discuss whether the questions are important, or characterize the role of simulation in particular games and "species" of games, or analyze why some games don't attempt to be completely realistic. Your response should mention a few specific games.
Winter Quarter	
In lecture on Tuesday, Prof. Neuman suggested reading Virgil's *Aeneid* as a narrative conversion. Such conversion stories often contain recurrent structural elements specific to this genre which reflect key moments in the conversion process and make these stories recognizable as conversion narratives. For this writing diagnostic please focus on the meaning of Aeneas' journey through Hades. Specifically, explain the necessity and purpose of Aeneas' journey through Hades (1) for his own conversion, and 92) using Virgil's *Aeneid* as an example, make a claim about the potential story for the genre of the conversion narrative as a whole.	In Alexander Seropian's article "Postmortem: Wideload Games' *Stubbs the Zombie*" (Gamasutra, August 11, 2006), the author writes that "the key to these commandments was size -- as in small size." Write a short essay arguing for or against developing a game with a small team, in either case discussion some of the trade-offs and experiences mentioned by Seropian.
Spring Quarter	
Your diagnostic essay should be no longer than one page in the standard MLA format. In a well-developed 1 page essay, answer the following questions: Is Agamemnon's death at the end of the play a "ritual" murder/sacrifice? Why does it matter, in terms of the themes of the play, if his death is ritual or not? You may wish to consider the issues of law that Jane explained on Tuesday. Use specific passages from the play in your argument.	Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of working on a team for the team-developed game and Design Document. How does it compare to working as an individual? Be sure to use a specific example.*

* Prompt provided by FIP Writing Director.

Since the prompts varied somewhat across quarters and between courses, it was decided to assess only two dimensions of writing with the one-page essays: 1) fluency (length or number of words), and 2) word choice. To reduce the amount of time needed to review the essays, a computerized assessment tool called Lextutor® was selected for this analysis. This tool is designed to assess fluency (length or number of words) and word choice (percentage of words frequently found in academic texts).

According to its publisher, Lextutor® operates as follows;

> " [Lextutor®]... takes any text and divides its words into four categories by frequency: (1) the most frequent 1000 words of English, (2) the second most frequent thousand words of English, i.e. 1001 to 2000, (3) the academic words of English (the AWL, 550 words that are frequent in academic texts across subjects), and (4) the remainder which are not found on other lists. In other words, [it] measures the proportions of low and high frequency vocabulary used by a native speaker or language learner in a written context." (http://lextutor.ca/vp/eng/vp_research.html)

Although primarily used to assess the vocabulary acquisition of second-language learners, there is evidence that Lextutor® is a valid tool for assessing lexical complexity, and is "reliable across…texts by the same learner (provided genre is the same)" (Laufer & Nation, 1995). To help us interpret the results from Lextutor®, we consulted with Professor Robin Scarcella who has used the computer program in her research studies. She indicated that the best indicator of progress in writing is the presence of academic words. According to Prof. Scarcella, an increase of 1% or more in academic vocabulary is an indication of good progress, especially if the essay topics are comparable over time.

Results using Lextutor® are presented in Table 4. Both word counts and presence of academic words are reported. Regarding fluency, the average number of words per essay improved steadily across quarters for both courses. The average word count increased from 284 to 315 for US11 students, and from 223 to 271 for US12 students. Regarding academic vocabulary, the percentage of academic words increased significantly in essays written by US12 students, but no such improvements were detected for US11 students. It's not clear what might have contributed to the steady state for US11 students, except that we do know the writing prompts differed from quarter to quarter. It is also not clear why the percentage of academic words is lower for writing in US11 than in US12.

Table 4: Analysis of One-Page Essays Using Lextutor®

Trait Assessed	Fall 2006	Winter 2007	Spring 2007
Fluency (Word Count)			
US11	284	313	315
US12	223	190	271
Academic Vocabulary (% of Academic Words)			
US11	4.2%	4.9%	3.8%
US12	5.1%	9.8%	9.0%

3. Capstone Papers

All FIP students were required to complete a capstone paper. The paper was due at the end of Winter Quarter in US12 and at the end of Spring Quarter in US11. The writing prompts for the capstone courses are located in Appendix A.

In US11, students had three options for completing the capstone paper 1) 8-10 page paper on any text or topic discussed in the course, with a research component; 2) 10-12 page research paper on a student movement and as part of a group, write a manifesto; or 3) an extensive research paper of 15-20 pages on one topic from the readings and themes of the course.

In US12, students were required to write approximately 1500 words (6 to 7 pages) on the work of one person/artist (or a collaborative group) who used computer game technology to create a non-commercial, experimental, or artistic project, comparing the creator's work to his/her contemporaries and predecessors, and using cultural and theoretical frameworks. Their papers were due at the end of Winter Quarter so that students could focus on the completion of their group-developed computer game and its design document during Spring Quarter.

The assessment of the FIP capstone papers was modeled after a pilot assessment project completed in August 2006 which involved a blind scoring of 20 randomly selected capstone papers from Writing 39C and Humanities Core Course 1C (both satisfy the second course of the lower division writing requirement). In that study, a four-by-four matrix was used to determine the presence or absence of certain traits that had been extracted from course writing assignments and writing scoring rubrics. The authors of that study concluded that the matrix was very useful for identifying strengths and weaknesses of papers and that it provided immediate curricular guidance for the two courses involved.

As a result of the success of the pilot project, the matrix was adapted to FIP courses by the FIP Writing Director working with the writing directors of WR39C and HCC1C (see Table 4 for the revised assessment matrix used in the FIP study). For the FIP assessment project, all capstone papers were collected and a random sample of 6 US11 papers, 6 US12 papers, plus one long US11 paper were evaluated using the revised matrix (Table 5). Three readers, not affiliated with any of the writing courses or the FIP courses, were asked to do the assessment. To promote inter-rater reliability, readers attended three separate training sessions to review the assessment matrix, to review the writing prompts, to come to agreement on what constitutes presence or absence of the 16 primary traits, and to practice using the assessment matrix. They also attended a meeting with the TAs so they could ask questions about the courses and the writing prompts.

Table 5: Writing Assessment Matrix for FIP Capstone Papers

Analysis	Evidence (Research)	Conventions	Structure
Purpose evident; thesis arguable	Source material is integrated into writing	Consistent use of conventional style sheet for discipline	Effective introduction or overview
Use of expert knowledge; evidence of understanding material	Multiple authors cited and/or listed in references	Appropriate word choice/diction	Paragraphs are internally organized
Evidence of critical thinking; a consideration of multiple perspectives	Sources used are credible	Evidence of editing or proofreading; few surface errors	Clear use of transitions or headings and subheading
Substantive, evaluative conclusions	Evidence of critical evaluation of sources	Objective and/or stylistically appropriate voice	Suitable overall organization

The assessment session took place on July 6, 2007, and was led by the FIP Writing Director. The first portion of the day was devoted to a review of the assessment matrix and the writing samples. Each reader then read and assessed all 13 papers for the presence or absence of each of the 16 traits in the assessment

matrix. The results were then tabulated. To strengthen inter-rater reliability, two of the three raters had to agree that the trait was present before it was recorded as such.

Results are presented in Table 6. For FIP courses overall[1], the six strongest traits were:

- Analysis: purpose evident and thesis arguable (100% of papers)
- Analysis: use of expert knowledge; evidence of understanding of material (100% of papers)
- Evidence: source material is integrated into writing (100% of papers)
- Evidence: multiple authors cited and/or listed in references(100% of papers)
- Evidence: sources used are credible(92% of papers)
- Conventions: consistent use of convention style sheet for discipline (100% of papers)

And the three weakest traits were:

- Analysis: substantive, evaluative conclusions (38% of papers)
- Evidence: evidence of critical evaluation of sources (31% of papers)
- Conventions: evidence of editing or proofreading; few surface errors (31% of papers)

All other traits were present in 54% to 85% of the papers. In terms of the four majors headings (analysis, evidence, conventions and structure) the best performance was in the area of evidence, followed by analysis and conventions, with the worst performance in structure.

These results suggest that students' writing in their capstone papers demonstrated good performance in the use and analysis of evidence, but could use assistance in how to structure their papers. They also need help in critical evaluation of sources and how to make substantive and evaluative conclusions -- both traits were rated low in this analysis. And rather surprisingly, they also need to be reminded to edit or proofread their papers to avoid making surface errors.

Table 6: Presence of Writing Traits in FIP Capstone Papers

Writing Traits	FIP Capstone Papers (n = 13) [a]	
	Count	Percent
Analysis		
Purpose evident; thesis arguable	13	100%
Use of expert knowledge; evidence of understanding material	13	100%
Evidence of critical thinking; a consideration of multiple perspectives	7	54%
Substantive, evaluative conclusions	5	38%
Evidence (Research)		
Source material is integrated into writing	13	100%
Multiple authors cited and/or listed in references	13	100%
Sources used are credible	12	92%

[1] For results by course, please contact Dr. Natalie Schonfeld, nschonfe@uci.edu.

Evidence of critical evaluation of sources	4	31%
Conventions		
Consistent use of conventional style sheet for discipline	13	100%
Appropriate word choice/diction	10	77%
Evidence of editing or proofreading; few surface errors	4	31%
Objective and/or stylistically appropriate voice	10	77%
Structure		
Effective introduction or overview	10	77%
Paragraphs are internally organized	11	85%
Clear use of transitions or headings and subheading	7	54%
Suitable overall organization	7	54%

[a] Based on a random selection of 13 FIP capstone papers (7 from US11 and 6 from US12). Each paper was assessed by 3 readers using an assessment matrix of 16 primary writing traits.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Using both direct and indirect measures of student writing, this study suggests that a sizeable portion of students enrolled in the First-Year Integrated Program achieved the intended writing objectives of the program. Students' own self-assessments of their writing skills and abilities improved steadily over all three quarters, indicating that students detected significant gains in their writing. Both direct assessments of student writing -- the one-page essays and the capstone papers -- confirmed that students made progress in their writing skills and also exposed the need for more intentional writing prompts and writing instruction that is consistent across time and courses, yet reflective of the distinctive approaches of the various academic disciplines engaged in FIP courses. The use of the assessment matrix, first developed as a joint project of WR 39C and HCC 1C courses, and revised based on the recommendations outlined in that project report, demonstrates its usefulness for the assessment of FIP capstone courses and for the identification of writing strengths and weaknesses of both the students and the curriculum.

In light of these findings, we'd like to make the following recommendations:

- While it is important to allow the individual FIP courses to have their own unique content and structure, greater clarification is needed on those aspects where uniformity would best serve both the students and the aims of FIP, such as the number of writing assignments required and the length of those assignments. For example, CEP could consider adopting guidelines for writing in FIP courses similar to those already adopted for upper division writing courses which ensure some level of uniformity in terms of amount of writing expected.

- To better assess the quality of writing over time (all three quarters), greater attention needs to be paid to the development of the writing prompts and writing conditions for the one-page essays and the capstone projects, both within and across courses. In such efforts, the FIP Writing Director could work with the instructional teams of both courses to develop assignments and review students' progress in writing, thereby more successfully guiding the development of writing that both honors the disciplines and reflects the lower division writing requirement.

- The assessment of writing in FIP courses should continue for at least another year (through 2007-08), using both the one-page essays and a random sample of capstone papers. Since the assessment matrix used in the evaluation of the capstone papers worked especially well, we strongly recommend using it again in 2007-08.

Based on the writing study presented here, plus other components of our assessment study including classroom observations and interviews with faculty and TAs, we see tremendous benefits of FIP for students, especially in the multi-disciplinary approach to topics and the integration of context-specific writing instruction. Students appreciate the opportunity to investigate topics from different perspectives and have commented positively on the interdisciplinary approaches used in these courses. It is these qualities, with the addition of learning writing in context, that allow the First-Year Integrated Program to make a unique and meaningful contribution to undergraduate education and instruction at UCI.

References

Laufer, B., & Nation, P. (1995). Vocabulary size & use: Lexical richness in L2 written productions. *Applied Linguistics 16* (3), 307-322.

Appendix A
Capstone Paper Writing Prompts

US 11 – Persuasion and Social Change

Option A: US 11C – Research Paper

General Assignment Parameters:
Your final paper for this class will be 8-10 pages long and will include a research component. The topic and focus of your research should be taken from any of the texts or topics we have dealt with during the year. Your paper should, in some way, address the topics of war, law, or political protest broadly figured.

The research component: You will be asked to find two critical secondary sources that make contradictory or related arguments about the text or topic you chose. In addition, you must also find one source that deals with the historical context or later reception of the text in question. For instance, you might do historical research on the performance conditions of a given play that we have read; or you might research the immediate effect Kuhn had on the scientific or philosophical establishment; or perhaps the effects Malcolm X's Autobiography had on the development of the civil rights movement, etc.

Topics (in rough form – you should shape these to fit your own personal interests if you choose to use one of them). This is a short list of suggestions to help you establish a topic you are interested in; please see your TA to suggest/discuss variations of these topics:
- Under what conditions can a student movement be successful? Choose a specific student movement and create an argument about the potential / perceived efficacy of this protest or movement. To whom and for what reasons was this movement considered effective? What conditions lent themselves to the success or failure? Your paper should answer some or all of these questions in terms of a specific, unified thesis.
- Is the draft constitutional? Is it legal? Is it legal in some cases on not in others? Is conscientious objection legal?   Using case histories from the courts, take a position on the draft.
- Compare the War on Terror to any other U.S. war or conflict. Look at the specific rhetoric used to justify both wars, the effects of the wars, and the reaction of the public to the wars. Make an argument about the legality of the War on Terror based on this historical evidence.

Option B: US 11C – Rebel Alliance Paper (w/ Glenn)

This assignment option is designed for students who have already expressed an interest in putting the lessons of this class into concrete practice. This is more work than your peers will be completing. On the other hand, you have a chance to make a substantial impact on your community and participate in a truly unique project.

Major Components (See below for more details)
- Complete the source evaluation essay on the Aeschylus plays.
- Complete in class exam
- Individually complete a 10-12 page research paper on a student movement.
- Based on this research, create a manifesto (and name) for your entire group.
- Propose and implement a method / protest that will make the appropriate community aware of your manifesto.

- You will have one additional section meeting every two weeks during which we will discuss paper topics, problems, protests, and progress.
- You will submit an informal topic proposal by the start of week two. This proposal should indicate which student movement you plan to focus on along with a preliminary list of sources (5 minimum – all academic) you plan to use for research.
- You will submit an annotated bibliography by the end of week three. At this time you will be required to present brief (5 sentence) summaries of at least 5 of the secondary critical sources or primary materials you plan to use. At least one source should be primary and at least one should be secondary. You may also have one general "field source" that talks about student movements more broadly. This source may be shared with your group and you may write the annotations collectively. At this point, I reserve the right to assign you additional reading as I see fit.
- You will submit an outline by the end of week four.
- Your first draft will be due at the end of week seven (it will be peer reviewed in week eight).
- Your manifesto will be submitted in week 9 / 10 as decided by your proposal for dissemination of your views.
- As a group write a brief (2-5 page) report on how your dissemination of ideas went.
- The final copy of all material (and the appropriate actions) must be submitted by Friday of finals week.

Option C: US 11C – Extensive Research Paper (w/ Jason)

Have we worked on a topic you would like to know more about? Is there anything we have done so far in US11 that really piqued your interest and made you wonder what the wider contexts or ramifications of aspects of that topic might be?

This assignment option is designed for students who would like to spend one quarter doing extensive research on one topic that stems from the readings and themes we have dealt with this year thus far. The assignment offers you the opportunity and guidance needed to design and successfully complete an in-depth research and writing project on a topic of your choice.

Time-Table and Guidelines for the 15-20 Page Research Paper:
- You will have one additional section meeting every two weeks during which we will discuss paper topics, problems, and progress.
- You will submit an informal topic proposal by the start of week two (April 9th). This proposal should indicate which text(s) and topics you plan on focusing on in your research project. It should also indicate a rough area of argumentation (i.e., a preliminary (hypo-) thesis). This proposal should be no longer than one page and may be as short as a paragraph.
- You will submit a source analysis and an annotated bibliography by the end of week five (May 4th). At this time you will be required to present two secondary critical sources. However, in order to successfully complete this assignment, you will need substantially more than two sources. I estimate that you will need two or three "field coverage" sources, which situate your argument in the current academic discussion, one or two historical sources, and one or two critical sources for most of your papers – but this will shift depending on your topic. I may also assign you some relevant additional reading as we see fit.
- You will submit a project prospectus by the beginning of week six (May 7th).
- Your first draft will be due at the end of week eight, by the evening of May 25th to your peer-editing partner and the drop box (it will be peer reviewed over the weekend).
- During week nine you will meet with Jason in an extra office hour to go over your peer-editor's feedback and discuss potential changes to your paper.

- Your final draft will be submitted to the appropriate professor and to Jason by the end of finals week.

US 12 – Computer Games as Art, Culture, and Technology

US 12B – Capstone Paper

Overview
Your third paper in US12 will be a carefully researched investigation into computer games as a non-commercial, experimental or artistic medium. This paper will be an investigation and analysis of the work of one person/artist (or collaborative group) who has used computer game technology to create a non-commercial, experimental and artistic project. The essay will be based on the student's research into the creator's history and writings; the practices of his/her contemporaries; and the work's predecessors, cultural framework and theoretical models. In this paper, you will insightfully argue why this project was made. Go beyond the obvious and present a rich selection of evidence in a targeted argument.

Beyond comparing and contrasting this project with its context, you should synthesize and draw up insightful themes that argue for motivations behind the project and the context or historical "moment" in which the developer or artist did his or her work. As a preliminary "menu" of techniques and themes, Lozanno-Hemmer describes several themes in "Perverting Technological Correctness" (1996) that technically-oriented artists employ while creating work: simulation of technology itself, misuse of technology, stereotype bending, non-digital approaches to virtuality, pain, questioning culture's often uncritical insistence on "progress", performative action, adapting the digital to reinterpret the analog, and ephemeral intervention.

You are encouraged to use these themes as a starting point to describe your own thesis about your particular example. In your synthesis, explain and argue why the experimental or artistic game was made in reference to a specific context - a historical moment, cultural framework or theoretical model. These themes can drawn from "Perverting Technological Correctness" or you are encouraged to define your own. Feel free to also draw on themes/concepts presented in the previously assigned Adams and Jenkins essays.

The final paper will be approximately 1500 words long, plus screenshots, illustrations, and citations/annotations. Use Times New Roman 12 point font, or the nearest equivalent on your computer, and double spacing. Put your name, the paper's title, and your discussion section number at the top of the first page, and add a footer on each page of the paper which includes your name.

You are required to include annotations for the four (4) key sources used in your paper. You can write more annotations, but are not required to do more than four. In terms of annotation format, you can use the format presented in discussion, or the format you've used in 39B @ UCI. As a review, the format presented in discussion is as follows:

"Write a concise annotation that summarizes the central theme and scope of the book or article. Include one or more sentences that:
1. evaluate the authority or background of the author,
2. comment on the intended audience,
3. compare or contrast this work with another you have cited, or
4. explain how this work illuminates your bibliography topic."
Citations need to stick to one consistent citation format/style. If you haven't picked a specific style, consult "Writing From A to Z" or consult an online source like
http://library.duke.edu/research/citing/within/