

## **HONR494**

### **Research Assignment**

As mentioned in the syllabus, a major objective of this course will be to undertake a professional research project. Most of you will write a paper of about 6,000 words (20 pages), though I am open to other types of projects. The focus of the project is up to you and may include anything that has to do with E. O. Wilson, broadly conceived. It must be a new project, based on primary and secondary material, and related to the overall themes of the course. It must say something about the relationship between science and the humanities.

Your final product should demonstrate a mastery of both primary and secondary material. This may include material assigned in class as well as other primary and secondary literature that you will acquire through interlibrary loan, online databases and journals, and print material, all accessed through the MSU Library system.

On Wednesday, October 10<sup>th</sup>, you are required to turn in a bibliography of the material you may use for the project. This is your “Library Assignment,” and should demonstrate a familiarity with the material that has been published on your topic.

On Monday, October 29<sup>th</sup>, you are required to turn in a three-page professional “Research Prospectus” that describes your research project. This should include a brief overview of the research field, the current debates within that topic, and how your own research fits within those debates. As you place your own work within the research field, you will want to offer a clear and concise statement of your argument. Then, describe the manner in which you intend to prove your thesis by outlining the major sections of your paper, always bringing the discussion back to your main argument. It should demonstrate both what you are arguing and how you are arguing it; it should demonstrate the flow -- the overarching narrative arc and idea arc -- of your research, from your introduction, through your major sections, to your conclusion. You will want to end with the ramifications (importance, significance, the “so what?”) of your work. Please attach a “Bibliography” to your Prospectus. (Another way to look at a research prospectus is from my perspective: I want to know that you have narrowed your topic, formulated a thesis, and are at the point (or close to the point) of being able to undertake the original research.)

On Wednesday, November 28<sup>th</sup>, your final research projects are due. This should be a finished, polished product.

On either Wednesday, November 28<sup>th</sup> or Monday December 3<sup>rd</sup>, you will present your material, in the form of a formal presentation, to the entire class.

The Research Project is worth 50% of your grade: Library Assignment (5%), Research Proposal (10%), Final Project (30%), and Formal Presentation (5%).