

# ARGUMENTS ON GLOBAL ISSUES PROJECT

## ASSIGNMENT OVERVIEW

This project assignment is intended to teach students important skills related to multimodal writing, argumentation, research, rhetoric, and critical thinking (which includes intellectual empathy). To do so, students are required to (1) research a global issue from a non-U.S. citizen perspective, (2) break down a non-U.S.-citizen's argument on that issue using the Toulmin model, and (3) present their findings in a compelling multimodal manner.

The integration of global studies fits with KCC's mission to "increase awareness and develop a more global perspective of the human condition and one's adaptation to the total human environment" ([KCC Mission & Value Statements](#)). It also works well with the English department's mission "to cultivate well-rounded, critically reflective individuals ... [who] engage with each other and the world, ... participating as an empowered member of modern society ... [and] mak[ing] meaningful connections between oneself and the ideas, experiences, and emotions of others."

This will be a multi-step project with smaller pieces and assignments due along the way. Because of this, students should be sure to select global issues that deeply interest them as they will be spending a lot of time working with them in this class. We will brainstorm together as a class to determine what does and does not count as a "global issue" (it is pretty much any issue that has a global impact) and every student will have the opportunity to run his or her ideas past the class and the instructor for feedback. Students are expected to develop a strong research question to guide them as they begin Step 1 of this project's process....

## STEP 1: RESEARCH A GLOBAL ISSUE FROM A NON-U.S. CITIZEN PERSPECTIVE

Each student is expected to find **at least 4 sources** on his or her selected global issue. The sources should reflect a non-U.S. perspective on said issue (for example, I might look at climate change from the perspective of Ecuadorian farmers and fishermen). The sources do not need to be scholarly or academic (they can be) but they must be credible. We will discuss these requirements further in class.

Students will be given some class time to research but will be expected to do further research outside of class. Support will be provided by the instructor and KCC research librarians.

To support students' reading and understanding of their selected research sources, we will do some activities in class that focus on summarizing, evaluating, and analyzing each selected source. An annotated bibliography will be required to conclude this step; it will demonstrate the students' understanding of their selected sources and indicate that they are prepared to begin Step 2....

## STEP 2: BREAK DOWN THE ARGUMENT ON THAT ISSUE USING THE TOULMIN MODEL

Students have been introduced to the basics of the Toulmin model before this project began, but we will review the information again in class as we begin to apply it to students' global issues. Based on information from their research materials and their own critical thinking skills, students will break down a major argument related to their issues, identifying each of the basic elements of Toulmin's structure:

- Claim – one of the major/key arguments offered on the issue from a non-U.S. perspective
- Qualifiers – any limits placed on that claim
- Reasons/Evidence – support for the claim
- Warrants – underlying assumptions (values/beliefs/circumstances) that support the claim
- Backing – evidence for each warrant

Students will compile this information in a worksheet and write a brief reflection on how they, as individuals living in the United States, agree and disagree with the argument that they have broken down. This will include a discussion on which of the identified warrants they do and do not share with the original, non-U.S.-citizen's argument. The worksheet and the reflection will prepare students to present their findings as part of Step 3...

### STEP 3: PRESENT YOUR FINDINGS IN A COMPELLING MULTIMODAL MANNER

To share their findings with the rest of the class, students will design and create a multimodal Canvas page within our course (I will provide a blank Canvas page for each student to work with). "Multimodal composition" refers to a piece of communication that involves multiple modes (like visual, verbal/aural, written, etc.) that work together to create meaning. Therefore, **your multimodal Canvas page should incorporate some text, at least three images, a relevant video, and four relevant hyperlinks.**

Students may create their own images and videos, if they would like, but they are not expected to do so. Most students will locate usable images and videos on the internet—we will discuss in class how to do so and how to appropriately cite such sources and respect copyrights and licenses.

The Canvas page should share the student's argument breakdown as well as key points from the student's reflection. The page should be visually engaging and look as professional as possible. We will review design principles in class and discuss examples.

### IN CONCLUSION ...

Each step culminates with at least one product that will count toward students' final grades in this course. To review, these assignments include the following:

- An annotated bibliography on the 4 selected sources
- A completed Toulmin model worksheet
- A written reflection
- A multimodal Canvas page, designed by the student

Further details on each of these assignments (and how they will be evaluated) will be shared in class when we begin each step in the process. A final self-reflection on the project as a whole will also be assigned.

Any questions?