

To: WAMS 3201 Students
From: Dr. Bryan A. Lutz
Date: August 31st, 2021
Subject: Assignment #4 – Guided Self-Actualization – Due Thursday, December 16th

Summary

- Genre(s): short essay / syllabus / poem or speech
- Formatting: Descriptive headings, Times New Roman font, double spaced, and page numbers
- Length: around 1200 to 2000 words
- Documentation style: MLA or APA
- Grading weight: 25%
- Final draft due: Thursday, December 16th

In Assignment #4 – Guided Self-Actualization, you will complete three small assignments out of five available options. For all five options, this assignment involves either research or reflection or both. It is designed to help you realize and fulfill your own talents for activism and advocacy.

Your target audience is academics, advocates, and activists. While you are writing for an audience, the primary goal is personal growth. Actualization involves reflecting on your developing talents and determining for yourself how to be the best advocate or activist (or both) that you can be. Since this one assignment is essentially three smaller assignments, it is encouraged to subdivide the text using clear descriptive headings to guide your reader.

Assignment #4 fulfills the following course objectives:

- define and distinguish between advocacy and activism as distinct persuasive purposes.
- draft and revise documents.
- utilize the fundamentals of design for print and digital production.
- assess rhetorical situations, identifying audience, purpose, genre, and context.
- further develop your research and critical thinking skills.
- use discipline-specific technologies and presentation strategies for the public discussion and dissemination of research and writing.

The five available options are detailed below. **You may start and complete your assignment at any time during the semester. The assignment is due Thursday, December 16th.**

Keywords: activist, advocate, research, social justice, persuasion, audience, purpose, genre, readability, analysis

Option 1: My Role Model Activist/Advocate

Role models represent an inspirational ideal, someone who inspires others to imitate his or her good behavior. Suitable for our class, the motto “be the change” comes to mind when describing a role model. Role models embody—in word and in deed—the kinds of advocate, activist, or both that we may want to become.

Form and structure: write an approximately 500-word biography describing your role model and how they inspire your own activism or advocacy. Describe the who, what, where, when, and why of your role model’s activities and how you are inspired to imitate or innovate their work. Use three to five sources to support your description and cite information about your role model using either MLA or APA format. You might include a photo of your role model with a citation for where the photo came from; you might also include a photo of yourself. It is also encouraged to use color, logos, photographs, slogans, and illustrative quotes. Review the readings from KK Ottesen’s *Activist: Portraits of Courage* for inspiration on the form and structure (but not word count).

Option 2: Social Justice Bibliography

In social justice work, as in academia, a bibliography is a list of important readings on topic or issue. Sometimes bibliographies are called “syllabi” in social justice movements, though these syllabi do not often contain schedules, course policies, or other elements that students might immediately associate with that term—just resources. For your own bibliography, pick a cause that you care about. Then, list three sources that you feel are essential reading for anyone who may want to join your cause. Provide annotations for each of your three sources that explain their importance or impact. Imagine a reader who needs to decide whether each source is useful to them.

Form and structure: your bibliography should have an introduction and a body. The introduction states the topic being addressed and the purpose of the bibliography (inform, instruct, persuade, call out, call in, disrupt, etc.). It might also provide background information essential to understanding the topic as a whole. The body contains three citations with accompanying annotations. Annotations should briefly summarize the source and explain why the source supports the overall purpose of the bibliography. Each citation with annotation should be around 150 words so that the bibliography is 500 words total with the introduction. Cite your sources using either MLA or APA format.

Option 3: My Word, My Phrase, My Frame

Advocates and advocates need to be especially mindful of the vocabulary they use to explain social justice issues. Words like *intersectionality*, *deadnaming*, and *ableism*, or phrases like *freedom of speech*, *reproductive justice*, or *buffer class*, frame topics by explaining what is important for an audience to know and what is superfluous information. Framing is a way of structuring or presenting a problem or an issue so it can be addressed. As bell hooks argues: “before you can solve a problem, you first have to name it.”

Form and structure: This piece should be around 500 words. Define a word or phrase that frames what is important and relevant to advocacy and activism for a particular cause. You are free to choose a word

we have discussed in class, or your own that was absent from our discussions. A central question should guide your explanation: How does the term include important information while filtering less important information or excluding unimportant information? You might also note if the word or phrase is reliant on other definitions, or if it has competing or conflicting definitions depending on how it is used. Support your short blurb with three sources and cite your sources using either MLA or APA format.

Option 4: My Rant

It is common in advocacy and activism to employ polemic, or a strong verbal or written attack on someone or something. Polemic is contentious rhetoric intended to support a specific position through strong and forthright claims while undermining an opposing position. Polemic sometimes appears in opinion columns or speeches, but it can also appear in spoken-word poetry, graffiti, and more. But in every case, there is a rant of sorts: an impassioned piece that is written or spoken. They are less about persuasion per say, and more about achieving catharsis between the writer/speaker and the audience.

Form and structure: compose a polemical rant on an issue you care about. There are no limits on your expression. Citations are not required, but you might include attributive tags for any borrowed information. For example, “According to the CDC” or “Sister Angela Davis said.” You will want to limit your rant to around 500 words or so, but you may write considerably more if you feel compelled to do so.

Option 5: Describe Your Ideal World

Some of the most influential activists and advocates provide their vision for an ideal world. They convey a sense that the world is flawed, but that there is also potential to overcome those flaws through some form of collective action. In a short essay, describe your own ideal world: what would an ideal world order look like? What kind of world should we want to live in? What kinds of activities should be at the forefront of culture in this ideal world? How should people treat each other? In what manner should government and business be conducted (if at all)? In what areas should the most energy be focused (i.e. education, health, environment, etc.)? What kind of role models are best for your ideal world?

Form and structure: compose a short essay describing your ideal world. Similarly to Option 4, there are no limits on your expression. A short essay of around 500 words or so would be sufficient for this option, but you are free to write more should you chose. Citations are not required, but you might include attributive tags for any borrowed information.

Evaluation Criteria

- complete three of the five options presented in the prompt
- fulfill the criteria outlined within each chosen option of the prompt
- demonstrate consideration of the purpose, use, and the needs of the reader
- be well organized
- use visuals to enhance the message
- be free of spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors.

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