# FINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Due: 4/7
Points:200

## I. Why are we doing this?

**From a personal perspective:**

The tools you use to assemble this research paper (synthesizing information, finding gaps in an existing conversation, writing from a place of authentic inquiry, fulfilling the expectations of a specific genre, etc.) will continue to be relevant as you move through higher education. Even more so, these are skills you can abstract into almost any other writing task that you encounter in your daily life or chosen profession.

No matter what you are writing, your work will be determined by what's already been said on a given subject, your intended audience, and the expectations that accompany your chosen genre. The process of creating this paper, where you have crafted a specific genre (academic research paper) for a specific audience (readers of *Stylus*, writing studies scholars) provides you with skills that can carry over to other writing tasks. Also, it hopefully puts the underlying process of a performing a writing task under a microscope, making you more aware of skills you already have, and helping you use those skills mindfully in the future.

**From a community perspective:**

We've taken care to make sure your work on this paper is centered on an authentic point of inquiry. You've discovered a real question, a gap in the available literature that does not yet have a satisfactory explanation. Your work, no matter how conclusive/ inconclusive your findings, is creating new knowledge to address this gap.

There is no concrete barrier to performing meaningful scholarship, no "you must be this tall" sign that you have to pass before you add to the greater body of research. This paper will contextualize your research findings for

future scholars, as well as point a way forward for others to continue the conversation.

# II. What will you be doing?

You will be synthesizing your research findings with the work you have already completed throughout this semester. In 10+ pages, you will contextualize your primary research results within the framework of both the specific question and broader conversation/niche that you've chosen for this project. I recommend you keep a couple of *Stylus* articles open as you work to model both the format and the moves that you will often find in a successful research paper.

**Writing is Recursive**

Don't let the word "final" fool you -- while this is the last major paper you will be composing in this class, every writing task is a process in constant development and flux. Writing reflects our thinking, and, more likely than not, that thinking will change over time.

Even professional papers often are revisited and amended by authors years after their publication. The "perfect paper" does not exist. This project will reflect the culmination of all the knowledge you've absorbed and generated, but it's not the end.

So as you try to convey your ideas within the genre of a research paper to the best of your abilities, understand that this is just a step in a larger process. You can make it as well-suited for your audience's needs as possible. But do not worry about making it perfect -- it's impossible given the fluid nature of writing.

I will be looking for your work to be broken into the following sections:

1. **Introduction**: Establish the relevance of your research in the context of the preexisting conversation you discovered in your secondary sources. This should end with a direct link to your methodology, establishing exactly why your primary research method is adding new, important knowledge to address your research question. Look to your statement of significance and your literature review for content.

2. **Methods:** Briefly describe the methodology you used to conduct your primary research. You can look to your Revised Research Proposal for content here, but be careful to include any deviations you made to your methodology post-proposal that . Include a brief explanation for why you chose this methodology

-- why was this the best method available for you to answer your research question?

3. **Results:** Describe what you discovered in your primary research. Provide relevant data, quotes, or artifacts to help illustrate your point. In this section, you will just be providing your findings in detail, with an emphasis on any results that were unexpected, interesting, or especially relevant to your question.

4. **Discussion**:
    a. Analyze your results. Direct your reader to those trends, surprises, and turns in your research that seem relevant to your question.
    b. Frame those results. This is where you place your results within the specific context of your research niche/conversation. What effect did your results have on this conversation? Are there sources that your results reinforce, or, alternately, do your results provide an alternate perspective from what you found in the established literature? Be sure to directly cite both your data and your secondary sources to illustrate your points.
    c. Note limitations/confounding variables. What other explanations could there be for you results? What factors outside the scope of your research question might be influencing your data.
    d. Draw tentative conclusions and explore options for further research. Even if you think you found a definitive answer to your research question, the broader conversation isn't over. Where do you see the conversation going in the future? You can suggest future methods that could add more clarity to your findings, new avenues for study based on your results, analogous communities that could benefit from similar research, or any other questions that your results may prompt. The key is for this section to look forward to further possibilities rather than to look back in summary of your points.

5. **Works Cited/References:** List your sources with a consistent citation method (either MLA or APA).

6. **Appendices:** If you abbreviated data in your results section, you'll want to include your unaltered results here (ie: a full interview transcript here if you used quotes/abstracts in your results). Think about it in terms of whether there's any relevant data you discussed that the reader would want to be able to verify/analyze in its raw form. Also include any relevant consent forms or training certificates in this section as well.

# III. How will you know if it's good?

Review a *Stylus* model article and compare your work. Are there moves that the model uses that you don't incorporate in your paper? Make sure that those omissions are intentional as opposed to a gap in your synthesis. Also review the feedback you received in your second conference for revision guideposts (aspects that you might want to give special attention to before turning in your final draft).

Also, keep in mind that you have already done most of the work necessary for this paper earlier in the class. Review your previous assignments, both with an eye for what can be incorporated directly into this final research paper and for any potential unresolved issues raised in previous feedback.

A ten page paper sounds like a lot, but you absolutely can do this. Remember that writing is recursive. This is a final paper in the context of this class, but it's okay if you still have a messy product -- that's often how writing research papers in the real world works.

I'm looking for the broader skills at play rather than a product. Are you synthesizing your sources, are you entering into an authentic conversation, are you making a sincere effort to meet the expectations of this given genre?  As long as you perform those tasks and make mindful choices in response to feedback, you'll have met the expectations of the assignment.