

## Research Paper Assignment

### Introduction:

The purpose of the writing workshop is to teach you, the student, how to read critically, and to communicate clearly and concisely in a professional style. This assignment is designed to provide a medium through which you can improve your research and writing skills while increasing your knowledge about the criminal justice system.

The final product of the assignment will be a paper on the general topic of Police recruitment, selection, and training. The more specific thesis of the paper will be left to the student and may concern a training modality, recruitment process, or selection process involved in police recruitment, selection, and training. Agencies may include, but are not limited to police departments, and training facilities. The paper may be an evaluation of a department, or a comparison of different training techniques, selection, or recruitment policies. One could, for example, examine the issue of controversial tactical maneuvers, training ideologies, or officer education in terms of officer performance or department relations with the community.

The principal skills to be developed are analytical thinking and writing via the research process, and the use of documentation to support the thesis. Therefore, there will be substantial practice reading and paraphrasing articles from scholarly journals.

The task of writing the paper will be spread out through the semester in several steps, inclusive of choosing a specific topic and a thesis, finding evidence to support the thesis, developing an outline, and finally composing the best paper you have ever written! This paper is intended to be a fairly complete exploration of the topic, culminating with a recommendation for specific action intended to address the issues being examined.

The process of writing the paper has been broken down into 6 steps, each one a separate assignment, which will be graded and/or assessed, and weighted separately from your final research paper. Each step is described in detail in separate handouts; however, here are brief descriptions of each:

### Step One: Choosing a Topic & Thesis Presentation

Your instructors have chosen the general topic of “police recruitment, selection, and training”, but you must develop a more specific topic. In the course of narrowing the topic, you will need to conduct document research on the web and at the library. Choose a topic that can be handled in a relatively short (8-10 page) paper.

Once you have selected your topic you will need to determine a thesis. The thesis differs from the topic in that the topic tells what you are writing about, while the thesis states what you are going to say about the topic. For example, if the topic is "Does the conflict between New-school officer training and Old-school police cultural ideologies affect the productivity of new officers?" then one might develop the following thesis: “While New-school officers are being trained to utilize more liberal methods of conduct, Old-school police department ideologies present an obstacle to the successful recruitment of these New-school officers.” Keep in mind that you are not being graded on your opinion, but on your ability to communicate and support a point of view (your thesis). Supporting the thesis means utilizing evidence to clarify and support the point of view, and that evidence comes from your research.

Topic and Thesis Oral Presentation: This will be a graded oral presentation, using only a 4X6 note card. The day of your presentation you will turn in a type written, double-spaced description of your topic and thesis (minimum of one half-page in length). A handout will be provided online that will further address the details of this assignment.

### **Step Two: Literature Search**

A list of 10 references (scholarly journal articles) in APA format will need to be compiled. The references must be empirical or theoretical journal articles, which are from scholarly journals. Newspaper articles, magazine articles, "bulletins" or newsletters are not acceptable. See the following URL for a description of how to differentiate scholarly journal articles from popular magazine articles:

[http://www.sjlibrary.org/services/literacy/info\\_comp/articles\\_scholarly.htm](http://www.sjlibrary.org/services/literacy/info_comp/articles_scholarly.htm)

For additional help and examples of APA in-text citations and references, the following web page provides links to several sources: [http://www.sjlibrary.org/services/literacy/info\\_comp/citing.htm](http://www.sjlibrary.org/services/literacy/info_comp/citing.htm)

### **Step Three: Article Critiques II - IV**

The Article Critiques are more in depth analyses of three scholarly research articles. Ideally, you will be able to find 3 appropriate articles from the reference list you prepared in Step Two. You will be preparing a 2-3 page critique for each of the three articles (not including the cover page). They should be articles which you feel provide the most information for your paper.

**NOTE:** If there are not three appropriate articles on your original reference list, you may use others, but you must clear the article with your instructor before you do the critique to ensure that it meets the criteria for this assignment.

Article Critiques will be turned in throughout the semester. Article Critiques must be submitted to www.turnitin.com before turning in for grading. You will be submitting "Originality Reports" from www.turnitin.com with each Article Critique. Originality Reports are usually generated fairly quickly (i.e., within minutes); however, if the site is experiencing a lot of "traffic," the report generation process can take up to two full days. A handout(s) will be provided online that will further address the details of the article critiques.

### **Step Four: Preparation of Outline**

A detailed outline is necessary before writing a paper. Preparing a detailed outline is not difficult once the research has been substantially completed. Creating an outline is a matter of organizing the discussion of your research in support of, or in opposition to the thesis. A handout will be provided online that will further address the details of this assignment.

### **Step Five: Writing a draft**

Getting started on the first draft of a paper is often very difficult. However, having all the preliminary work done will simplify the task. The draft is just an elaboration of the outline. At this point, provided you have kept up, the paper should practically write itself. Keep in mind that this is just a draft and the sooner you begin this step the better. You should be able to write more freely and actually enjoy this process if you are not too pressed for time.

It is expected that your paper will incorporate relevant information from your article critiques, appropriate to your chosen topic. Your paper will exemplify the development of your analytical thinking and writing skills. You will use headings for each section of your paper, so as to ensure that you include everything that is required. Check the criteria for scoring your research paper as you write your paper to be sure you cover everything. **Research Paper Scoring** guide is attached.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** You will be submitting your draft to Turnitin.com for review. You should allow for 2 days to get your originality report back from Turnitin.com. In addition, having the draft completed on time is particularly important, because a significant part of your research project is having your paper Peer Reviewed. Late papers may miss the opportunity for a peer review. Consequently, there will be major deductions for late draft submission. The draft must be at minimum five pages. (Important bonus: A draft that is **exceptional** may be accepted by the instructor as the final paper!)

The draft must include a reference list with a minimum of six total sources: four references which must be scholarly journal articles (empirical or theoretical), the other two maybe from textbooks, or other scholarly literary works. A handout will be provided online that will further address the details of this assignment.

#### **Step Six: Peer Review**

You will be having your paper peer reviewed by two classmates. There will be specific guidelines for the reviews, which will be provided by your instructor. The Peer Review will be a graded assignment.

#### **Culminating Product: Final Draft of the Research Paper**

The text(body) of the final paper must be at least eight (8) neatly typed pages, *exclusive of the title page, abstract, outline and reference page*, typed in standard font (i.e., Times New Roman, Garamond, or Courier New, size 12, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins.

It will include:

- I. Title page
- II. Abstract of your paper (1/2 page, maximum, single-spaced)
- III. Outline of your paper (single-spaced)
- IV. Text of paper (8-10 pages, double-spaced)
- V. Reference page in correct APA format (double-spaced)
- VI. Turnitin.com Originality Report attached

**Your paper will be graded based upon the scoring guide, which is attached.**

**RESEARCH PAPER SCORING GUIDE**

**FORMAT: Did you follow instructions for this assignment? (LO 3)**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Title page
- \_\_\_\_\_ Abstract (single-spaced)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Paper outline (single-spaced)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Body of the paper (double-spaced)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Pages numbered
- \_\_\_\_\_ Appropriate headings for each section included
- \_\_\_\_\_ Correct APA format: (in-text citations and references)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Appropriate sources used
- \_\_\_\_\_ Submitted to turnitin.com

**CONTENT: Did you understand the literature you collected for this assignment? Were you able to incorporate what you learned into a compelling argument? (LO1; LO2; LO3)**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Strong, effective opening
- \_\_\_\_\_ Appropriate background information provided on the “issue(s)”
- \_\_\_\_\_ Clarity of purpose: clear statement of the thesis, along with a brief explanation of how the thesis will be analyzed
- \_\_\_\_\_ Appropriate use of data from your research, especially your literature review
- \_\_\_\_\_ Clear and well thought out compare and contrast element of two theories
- \_\_\_\_\_ Explained value of project
- \_\_\_\_\_ Effective, compelling closing
- \_\_\_\_\_ Originality of ideas, demonstrates insight into issues/problem/solution
- \_\_\_\_\_ Overall organization of paper

**MECHANICS: Is writing at college level? Did you proofread your paper before submitting? (LO1; LO3)**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Appropriate grammar
- \_\_\_\_\_ Appropriate punctuation
- \_\_\_\_\_ Appropriate use of vocabulary
- \_\_\_\_\_ Syntax
- \_\_\_\_\_ Fragments/Run-on sentences
- \_\_\_\_\_ Spelling/Typing errors