

Annotated Bibliography Assignment

Annotated bibliographies are ways that researchers collect work conducted in a particular research area, analyze how that work interacts, identify gaps in knowledge, and situate future research that aims to fill that gap. More than a bibliographic listing of sources, the annotated part of the annotated bibliography includes a summary of the article and an analysis of how the writer sees it fitting in an overall project.

In this assignment, the guidelines for annotations are as follows:

- The annotation must concisely accomplish the following points **at a minimum**: 1. Summarize the article's research questions, key findings, and conclusions or implications; and 2. Analyze the significance of that work (how it connects to other research you have gathered, its role as a germinal piece, what it misses, etc.) to your project or research question. Without both summary and analysis, an annotation is incomplete.
- You may choose to include other pieces of information, such as the methods used, theoretical frames employed, or disciplines involved, but the above minimum should be accomplished.
- Typical annotations are 150-200 words each (not including the MLA citation). Annotations should not be significantly longer or shorter than that range without justification.
- Annotations require summary and analysis in the researcher's own words; therefore, they are **entirely paraphrased**. They typically do not include direct quotations unless the author invents or develops a particular term or definition, which, when used, must be quoted directly and cited.

NOTE: Annotations and Plagiarism: if you have questions about paraphrasing in research, please consult the professor, the Writing Center, the MLA handbook, or other research resources. Reading a complex journal article and paraphrasing it in your own words is a challenge. Directly copying words or phrasing is unacceptable and will be considered plagiarism. Address any questions or concerns you have about this early in the assignment.

Your Assignment

In this assignment, you will identify a research project in professional writing and rhetoric, develop research questions, collect a bibliography and corresponding annotations of the most relevant sources on that question, and write a brief analysis/synthesis of the materials you have collected, which should posit some answers to your initial research questions and suggest directions for future projects and research.

The research topic should be related to the theory or practice of professional writing and rhetoric as we have conceived of it in this course.

Literary topics, original nonfiction writing, and journalism projects fall outside of the purview of this class. If there is something you are interested in one of those domains, think about how rhetorical theories we have studied may be relevant to one of these areas, and research one of those theories. Or simply use this assignment to explore something new. Many students will bring the project they begin in this class to their future PWR coursework, though not all do.

Annotated Bibliography Assignment

Item 1: Research Memo

Begin by finding a topic or area of scholarship that you find interesting and engaging, using our class reading, an article you read in the journal review, or a class discussion as an inspiration for a research topic.

Conduct initial research to help refine your topic, then submit a **brief** preliminary proposal that answers:

1. What your topic is, why you are interested in it, and what you hope to learn
2. How you see it as relevant to the study of professional writing and/or rhetoric (by connecting your topic to reading we have done in class, the topics we will address later in the semester, etc.)
3. MLA citations for three scholarly resources in a scholarly journal or scholarly book in rhetoric, professional writing, or writing studies that you anticipate citing in your project; they could guide your topic choice, method, or theory that you'd like to research.

You are welcome to submit two ideas or other alternatives if you are undecided on a topic.

Submit your preliminary research proposal to Professor Lawrence by **7:20 p.m. on October 23**.
Submit one hard copy in class.

Annotated Bibliography Assignment

Item 2: Final Research Proposal and Preliminary Annotated Bibliography (5%)

After you have had your topic approved, conduct preliminary research and develop your research questions for further examination in a full research proposal (see Carolyn Rude’s article for a more thorough discussion on research questions in technical communication).

The Final Research Proposal must:

1. Be brief (1-page, **single** spaced)
2. Describe the topic or area of interest and where it fits in Rude’s map of research questions in our field
3. Outline your initial research questions (no more than 2 or 3)
4. Provide a plan for how you will conduct this research (what databases, journals, and book resources do you anticipate looking in?)

You should think of items 2-4 as the sub-headers that will organize your proposal—Topic; Initial Research Questions; Research Plan.

The Preliminary Annotated Bibliography must include:

1. An annotation for Carolyn Rude’s “Mapping” article
2. A minimum of three annotated resources from your preliminary research (articles, chapters, or books that shape your initial interest or questions in this research area). At least one of these articles must be from a journal in professional writing or rhetoric.
3. Correct MLA citation

Overall, this assignment should be about 3 single-spaced pages—1 single-spaced page for the Research Proposal, and then 4 annotations, which should take up 2 pages.

Due Date: Monday, October 30, by beginning of class.

Annotated Bibliography Assignment

Item 3: Annotated Bibliography (15%)

As your project progresses, you should be looking at a variety of sources (books, journal articles, websites) that focus on your research topic. These should be primarily academic, secondary sources (as opposed to primary sources like records, documents, fiction, personal websites, etc.). A significant portion of these academic sources should also come from journals and research in professional writing and rhetoric.

The Annotated Bibliography must include:

- Twelve (12) annotated sources relevant to your project and research questions. You may include Rude's annotation as one of your final annotations if it relates to your project.
- For each entry, provide the bibliographic reference in MLA format.
- Each annotation must concisely accomplish the points outlined in this assignment; paraphrasing only

Due Dates:

Annotation 1 (3 additional sources, 6 total sources) due November 20, by the beginning of class. One hard copy in class, one electronic copy posted to Blackboard.

Annotation 2 (3 additional sources, 9 total sources) due November 27, by the beginning of class. One hard copy in class, one electronic copy posted to Blackboard.

Final Annotated Bibliography (12 total sources) due December 4, by the beginning of class. One hard copy in class, one electronic copy posted to Blackboard.

Criteria for Evaluation

This assignment will be evaluated on:

1. Adherence to the due dates and requirements
2. Thoughtfulness of summary and analysis
3. Effective paraphrasing
4. Proper MLA citation

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Item 4: Reflective Memo (10%)

Accompanying the Annotated Bibliography should be a reflective memo written to Professor Lawrence on your topic.

The Memo must:

1. Summarize the major findings/themes you discovered in your research or answers to your research questions
2. Discuss the questions you still have and how you might address them in a future project or additional research
3. Reflect on the research process, what you learned, and what you now know about academic research
4. Be approximately 1200-1500 words; ~3 **single-spaced** pages

Again, you should think of items 1-3 as the sub-headers that will organize your memo—Major Themes/Findings (this will be your largest section); Remaining Questions; Reflection.

You should also organize the Major Themes/Findings into sub-headers that organize your thoughts as well. You will have read a lot of material and found a lot of interesting things; the memo should really outline the *most significant* things that you found across your research and indicate what you think about it.

Things to keep in mind while synthesizing your research in the memo:

- You are expected to cite all of the material in the bibliography in your analysis, though the focus should be on analysis and synthesis rather than direct quotation.
- You should not copy-and-paste summaries from your annotations into the synthesis. This is not a place for direct summary, but instead for identifying themes and discussing findings.
- You do not need to include a Works Cited page for the memo unless you cite something not included in your Annotated Bibliography.
- It is okay if you don't "answer" all of your research questions. You should have findings relevant to the questions you set out to address.
- This document may be written less formally, as you are using this space to think through conclusions and make sense of your ideas, but it should still be legible, clear, and well organized.

Due Date: December 4, by the beginning of class. One hard copy in class, one electronic copy posted to Blackboard.

Criteria for Evaluation

This assignment will be evaluated on:

1. Thoughtful engagement with and analysis of the research; organization of concepts, ideas, and requirements; readable, proofread text; proper MLA in-text citation.