

## Major Writing Project #1

**Purpose:** In your first short essay, we practiced taking an arguable position, organizing our essays in a fashion that logically develops that position, and supporting your position with details and insightful analysis. In the next assignment, you'll have an opportunity to develop your analytic skills while learning to thoughtfully incorporate secondary sources. To this end, we'll visit both the Sallie Bingham Center for Women's History and Culture and Lilly Library to give you an opportunity to practice engaging in self-directed archival and scholarly research. You'll learn to evaluate and choose source material; thoughtfully incorporate direct quotation, paraphrase, and summary in a way that furthers an original argument of your own; consider possible counter-arguments; and properly cite your sources.

**Prompt:** Not everything we can learn about a space is observable on the surface of that space. This writing project gives you the opportunity to research the historical and theoretical context for understanding the transformation of a particular space or type of space, and the forces involved in its transformation.

You will choose a past or current community organization in Durham and respond to the question of how and *to what extent* that organization has helped to challenge the gender and sexual norms that operate within or across a particular space or set of spaces. For example, you might analyze the approach that an organization like Durham Unstalled has taken to increasing access to bathrooms for trans\*, gender non-conforming, and disabled people. You might look at space like Durham's Lesbian Health Resource Center and its attempts to expand access to health information and care, especially in the context of the AIDS epidemic. You might look at a more recent organization like Southerners on New Ground and what they're doing to combat the criminalization of LGBTQ people of color in the South. There are a lot of possibilities!

Remember to also consider what political and social forces might serve as obstacles to the organizations' projects. For example, you might need to consider how gentrification, law enforcement, business practices or the distribution of resources are also contributing to the shape of a particular space and, perhaps, working against or complicating the projects of these organizations.

Once you've established your own position in response to this question, consider the arguments set forth by both the scholars we've been reading in class and scholars whose work you've discovered on your own. Is there a scholar whose work provides a useful counter-point that you should take into consideration? Or how might the particular insights you have to offer help to forward their argument or add to an already existing scholarly conversation?

### **A successful essay will:**

- Fulfill the expectations of your first short essay, while also
  - incorporating well-chosen secondary source material in a way that advances an original argument of your own.
  - making thoughtful choices about when to use direct quotation, paraphrase, and summary.
  - critically engaging with and responding to source material.

- properly citing all source material.
- demonstrating a willingness to consider the limits of one's own argument and appropriately respond to potential counter-argument.

Part of what we'll do with this writing project is slow your writing process way way down. This will give you the opportunity to construct the strongest essay possible and to learn about yourself as a writer as you reflect on your process. In preparation for this essay, you'll be asked to engage in extensive research and brainstorming before constructing a provisional thesis. We'll meet one-on-one to discuss your thesis on Tuesday, **February 10<sup>th</sup>**. You'll then develop a tentative plan for how you might organize your argument that you'll be asked to share in class on **Tuesday, February 17<sup>th</sup>**. You'll then prepare multiple drafts of your paper, the first of which will be due in class on **Thursday, February 26<sup>th</sup>**. You'll receive feedback from your peers and written feedback from me on this draft.

### **Hints and Tips:**

- Before you begin, remember that reading and reflecting on texts is your first opportunity to begin generating ideas. Carefully annotate your readings, both those you do in class and that encounter in your research, and use your reading responses as a tool to help you reflect upon the more salient, provocative passages in the text; since this assignment requires you to engage with multiple sources and consider them in relationship to each other, this will be a particularly important part of your process.
- In this assignment, you'll have both primary sources that will serve as your objects of analysis and provide support for your argument. As you develop this argument, aim for 4-5 secondary scholarly sources. Remember that you likely won't find (and really shouldn't look for) articles that say *exactly* what you want to say. Instead, begin by thinking about the questions you might not know the answers to, and allow those questions to guide both your research process and the development of your argument. Let your curiosity guide you.

**Formatting Requirements:** Your essay should be 6-7 full pages, typed in 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced with one-inch margins, and properly paginated.

The final draft of your essay will be due via Sakai on **Friday, March 6<sup>th</sup> by 11:55pm**