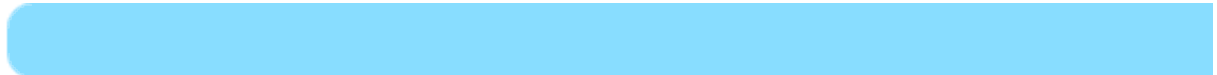




# jeff becker's class

897



tuesday, february 24, 2009

## Research Process Part 1 Steps 1 + 2

What is research? Why do we do it? While we all know we need it—for papers, to win arguments, to be better people—how to do it, and where to even start, is often difficult.

The problem is so often we are just told, “do research.” We know there’s a library and some fancy databases, but that doesn’t always help us. For most us, we don’t sit down with a thesis statement ready to go, we just have a vague idea of something we are interested in (which is why we do research to begin with).

The first goal of any researcher is to become familiar with the topic. This means doing background research and building our expertise on the subject. We may not know what we want to write about, but we are interested in food production. Our background research will help define what under the subject of food production we are interested in. The following is more of a guide than a science, but here are some ideas on process:

### Step 1:

Find a good, meaty topic. You need something you can sink your teeth into, but this is easier said than done. There are plenty of places to turn for ideas. Use these to peruse what we argue about:

- CQ Researcher
- Google, “controversial topics” see what turns up
- Nytimes.com—op eds, et.
- Procon.org
- Yahoo Issues and Causes
- Where are some places you turn to find topics?

WRITE--FOR YOUR TOPIC PROPOSAL: AFTER PERUSING THESE TOPICS, NARROW IT DOWN TO YOUR TOP THREE OR FOUR THEN PROCEED TO STEP 2.

### Step 2:

Turn your topics into a series of questions for each. For example, if you are interested in finding out about food production, pose the

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### about me



Jeff Becker  
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question, "What are the effects of food production?" However, just these questions won't suffice. What are some other questions you need to ask? "What effect do food additives have on nutrition?" "How is food produced and delivered to consumers?" Already, we are spinning our wheels. Depending on your topic, you may need to develop a list of questions you want answered. Just by doing this we are getting into the topic further. As you look around, more questions will pop up.

WRITE--Develop 4-5 questions for your own topic. TYPE THIS (with the above) UP AND BRING IT TO OUR LIBRARY CLASS ON MONDAY.

posted by jeff becker at 4:28 pm 0 comments

saturday, february 21, 2009

## For 2/23

Read: Pages 531-540 (Gladwell); 429-445 (Joy); and 462-470 (the section on Stem Cells).

Write: Use page 205 to write a rebuttal argument to one of the articles.

We will discuss: When Does Human Stop Being Good Enough?

posted by jeff becker at 11:14 am 0 comments

tuesday, february 17, 2009

## For 2/18

Please read the Global Warming section in Good Reasons. Pages 333-352. No writing assignment (boooo). Come prepared to argue.

posted by jeff becker at 9:36 am 0 comments

monday, february 9, 2009

## Schedule Mistakes

Class,

I knew there was something amiss when I told you what pages to read today (namely that the schedule doesn't list the best readings that I would like to concentrate on for this topic). For next class please read Good Reasons pages -353-367; 377-383. (I won't require, but will recommend Andrew Sullivan's article on 384-396). Write a precis of three of the five articles (except the intro on 353-355). Come prepared to talk!

The schedule is a mess. Expect to see a revised version later this week, or early next week.

Here is the link to the documentary I had hoped to show this morning:  
[http://www.rte.ie/news/2008/0603/primetimeinvestigates\\_av.html?2382832](http://www.rte.ie/news/2008/0603/primetimeinvestigates_av.html?2382832)

Jeff Becker  
ENGL 122-02

posted by jeff becker at 8:42 am 0 comments

wednesday, february 4, 2009

## The American Idea Essay

Hi class,

Since we ran out of time today, we will finish up with *Letter from A Birmingham Jail* next time. Please have your American Idea essay ready to hand in. Remember, this is just an occasion for you to practice your writing and rhetoric skills.

To clarify:

I want you to look over the American Idea essays from the The Atlantic (the link is on the blog) and come up with your own. It should be only 400-600 words (roughly one page to one and half pages). It should answer, what is the "American Idea" to you (does it have a future? what are some obstacles to it). The problem is there is no one definition of the "American Idea," so you must develop your own based on your experience and study of America. Please feel free to interpret this prompt liberally, as the authors for The Atlantic do (hey if you want to make a comic strip--see Stan Lee's submission--go for it).

Since we have such a diverse class in such a diverse school and some of us may not have been born here, some of us may not be citizens, we have each "experienced America" differently (so there isn't really a right or wrong answer here). You can compare this America (of your experience to other places you know). You can address how certain events, texts, or anything else have solidified your belief of what America is. Also, use the texts we have been studying--the *Declaration of Independence*, *Letter from A Birmingham Jail*, Ch. 5, Barbara Jordan's piece, the Obama inaugural address, for inspiration and to help firm up and support your beliefs. Answer, what is the American Idea (to you) and use the ideas presented in The Atlantic to help guide your definition. Have fun with it. Due Tuesday.

ALSO. BE SURE TO READ GOOD REASONS, PGS 515-523; 556-564

posted by jeff becker at 12:47 pm 0 comments

sunday, february 1, 2009

## Readings for 2.5

Please read the Declaration of Independence and Letter From a Birmingham Jail.

Choose one of these texts and write a rhetorical analysis of it using the ideas presented in Ch. 5 of *Good Reasons*. See page 87 for help.

posted by jeff becker at 8:21 am 1 comments

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