# Essay 1: Argument/Exemplification

# Social Media and Activism

* **Final Draft Due: Tuesday 2/19**
* **Rough Draft for Peer Editing: Thursday 2/14**

## **Introduction**

Periods of social unrest can be difficult to understand and especially to live through; still, the right to organize and protest is fundamental in American society.  For generations, protest and social activism have taken on many shapes and forms and have helped to create the world we live in today.  In recent years, social activism has taken on a new form. Much of social organizing and protest seems to done online, often through social media networks such as Facebook and Twitter. Social media can provide a powerful tool for organizations to spread their messages and unite individuals toward a common purpose. However, it can also elicit complacency and what is often referred to as “slactivism.”

With this assignment, we will continue to look at and participate in academic conversation between scholars as they, and we, attempt to discuss and analyze the role of social media in political and social activism and our search of justice.

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## **Reading and Writing Skills**

Over the course of this assignment, we will continue to work on developing key academic reading and writing skills, which you will use throughout your career as a student and which constitute the basis of most scholarly writing. We will be annotating and close reading texts, dissecting parts of argument, analyzing and critiquing opposing points of view and finally creating our own arguments by developing strong thesis statements, incorporating sources into our argument and thoroughly explaining and analyzing evidence.

Academic scholars do not write in a vacuum—their arguments are typically in response to other arguments about the same topic. With this assignment, you will get the chance to participate in the academic conversation once again. We will begin by reading Malcolm Gladwell’s article “Small Change,” which discusses strong and weak ties and their effect on activism. We will then read criticism of his ideas, in the form of published articles by other scholars, so that we can see this idea of “academic conversations” in practice. After considering all of those viewpoints, you will enter the conversation about the role of social media in activism a social justice and write an essay explaining your argument about the topic.

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## **Focusing Questions**

Now that you briefly understand what we are doing with this assignment and why we are doing it, I will now introduce our guiding questions. Through our reading and writing over the next few weeks, we will be considering and discussing the following: What role does social media play in organizing political and social protest? How successful are social media organized campaigns?

**Your essay should clearly answer the following question: Is social media, overall, beneficial or harmful to modern day activism?**

## **Assignment Overview**

The section below outlines the specific requirement of this assignment.

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### Purpose

The purpose of this assignment is to:

1. Read and respond to a college-level text.
2. Compose college-level writing.
3. Produce an academic summary of an article.
4. Respond to a topic with an original argument.

### Goals

This assignment will help students meet the following Student Learning Objectives, as stated on the course syllabus:

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1. Use active/critical-reading strategies to produce accurate, concise summaries of college level/academic texts.
2. Synthesize researched material from multiple texts to create and support an argument in response to a prompt. Draw direct evidence from texts in support of claims and analyze how that evidence supports the claim.
3. Utilize the various phases in the writing process—prewriting, writing revision, and proofreading—to produce clear, articulate, well-supported, well-organized essays.
4. Avoid plagiarism by properly citing quoted, summarized, and paraphrased material using MLA format.

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### Texts

* Gladwell, Malcolm. “Small Change.” The New Yorker. 4 Oct. 2010
* Stone, Biz. “Exclusive: Biz Stone on Twitter and Activism.” *The Atlantic.* Oct 19, 2010.
* Berlatsky, Noah. “Hashtag Activism Isn’t a Cop-Out.” The Atlantic. 7 Jan 2015.
* Essig, Kate. “Activism or Slacktivism? How Social Media Hurts and Helps Student Activism.” St. Louis Public Radio. 2 Jan. 2014.
* Zeynep, Tufekci. “Online Social Change: Easy to Organize, Hard to Win.” Ted Talk. Oct. 2014.

### Task

Compose an essay, between 800-1000 words in length, which presents an argument about the topic of social media activism. **Again, your essay should clearly answer the following question: Is social media, overall, beneficial or harmful to modern day activism?**

More Specifically:

* Your essay must include cited evidence from at least three of your assignment texts.
* Your essay must also include your argument about the effect of social media use on political and social activism. That means you need a **thesis and topic sentences**, which state your **claim** and **reasons** why. You also need **support** for your argument in the form of cited material and personal experience. **You will be using PIE paragraph structure**
  + Your argument should include at least one counter-argument, or point your opposition could raise, to which you respond with a refutation.

**NOTE: Since you are citing the article, and possibly your own sources, don’t forget your Works Cited page.**

## Requirements:

1. Rough Draft for Peer Review (30 points)
2. Final Draft (100 points)

**Final Draft Rubric**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **20** | **15** | **10** | **5** |  |
| **INTRODUCTION** Background/History Define the Problem Thesis Statement | Well-developed introductory paragraph contains detailed background information, a clear explanation or definition of the problem, and a thesis statement. | Introductory paragraph contains some background information and states the problem, but does not explain using details. States the thesis of the paper. | Introduction states the thesis but does not adequately explain the background of the problem.  The problem is stated, but lacks detail. | Thesis and/or problem is vague or unclear. Background details are a seemingly random collection of information, unclear, or not related to the topic. |  |
| **CONCLUSION** | Conclusion summarizes the main topics without repeating previous sentences; writer's opinions and suggestions for change are logical and well thought out. | Conclusion summarizes main topics.  Some suggestions for change are evident. | Conclusion summarizes main topics, but is repetitive. No suggestions for change and/or opinions are included. | Conclusion does not adequately summarize the main points. No suggestions for change or opinions are included. |  |
| **MAIN POINTS** Body Paragraphs Refutation | Three or more main points are well developed with supporting details. Refutation paragraph acknowledges the opposing view, and summarizes their main points. | Three or more main points are present but may lack detail and development in one or two. Refutation paragraph acknowledges the opposing view, but doesn't summarize points. | Three or more main points, but all lack development. Refutation paragraph missing and/or vague. | Less than three main points, with poor development of ideas.  Refutation missing or vague. |  |
| **USE OF SOURCES** Documentation | All source material is used and smoothly integrated into the text. All sources are accurately documented and in the desired format on the Works Cited page.  All sources are relevant and reliable. | All source material is used. All sources are accurately documented, but a few are not in the desired format on the Works Cited page. Most sources are relevant and reliable. | All sources are accurately documented, but many are not in the desired format on the Works Cited page. Some sources are relevant and reliable. | Lacks sources and/or sources are not accurately documented. Incorrect format is used. Sources are neither relevant nor reliable. |  |
| **MECHANICS** Sentence Clarity,  Punctuation & Capitalization | Punctuation and capitalization are correct. | Sentence structure is generally correct. Some awkward sentences do appear. There are one or two errors in punctuation and/or capitalization. | Work contains structural weaknesses and grammatical errors. There are three or four errors in punctuation and/or capitalization. | Work contains multiple incorrect sentence structures. There are four or more errors in punctuation and/or capitalization. |  |