

## Developing a Writing Fellows Program in a Time of Shrinking Budgets and Expanding Class Sizes

*[Italics ours]*

**#1** My big disappointment was that I thought so many students really really failed to understand *what a research paper was*, which I thought I had spent so much time and effort working on, that it was just deeply frustrating. Which is to say, to my mind I had done everything I could, but really I hadn't gotten through to them.

**#2** I actually told them very specifically at several points, that one goal of academic writing, and I talked about how there's totally a place for persuasive writing—but one thing you're trying to do when you're at a university, is that you're trying to find the answers to things that you don't already know the answers to, and that's by and large the *kind of paper I wanted them to write*. I wanted them to find the answers to something they didn't already know the answer to.

She has a lot of substance as I recall that's really good here, but it's not written in the kind of way that I was trying to push students— into *thinking in a disciplinary specific fashion*, or I should say, not in a [strictly] disciplinary-specific fashion, because I would think *that sociology papers would look similar*.

**#3** Because I allow students to write so broadly traditionally I end up having to read up on a lot of their sources to make sure they get to it right. And my general sense is this field is so broad and there are so many ways you can study it—[my approach is:] here, let me give you some ideas, and then go.

The introduction has to be big in the social sciences. You're not going to see a paper that doesn't have a big introduction, unless it has subsections. . . . But then once you're in there, you can do it several different ways.

**#4** At the moment, though, you're not really proposing a *research paper*. You're proposing a *persuasive essay*. That is, you already know what you think; you're going to try to convince me that you're right. Writing a persuasive essay is an important skill, but it's not the one I'm trying to foster in this class. *Instead, I'm pushing students to pose, research, and answer a question for which they don't already know the answer.*

I think the best research papers are persuasive essays. just persuasive essays that look carefully at both sides of arguments or for the weaknesses . . . The trickiest part is to go where the evidence leads you, and not just look for the evidence that takes you where you want to go.

We had tons of papers, articles, book chapters, that are largely well –written and accessible...so I work really hard to put together a set of materials that I think college students can get, so this is a pattern that they have seen over and over and over again and we spent time talking about, "So what's the argument," and "why did the person write this paper?" and "the reason you write a paper is not necessarily what your argument is". . . so the goal is not just to do substance in class, although substance clearly matters . . . but to step back.

# Lily Introduction

dropped in box - betw 12<sup>30</sup> - 1<sup>45</sup>  
to wed 4/27

POLS196B

## Transgender Visibility

An examination of media representations of transgender people in America and how they reflect on Societal Acceptance

In this paper, I seek to better understand the portrayal of transgender people in the media in order to evaluate whether they have become more or less accepted as a social group in recent history. This is an important topic because the acceptance (or lack thereof) of an social group is telling of the larger society it is situated within. The involvement of the media is also important because its control over the acceptance of a group shows how much power American culture is willing to give to the media. I will focus on film and television representations of transgendered folk, as well as print media images. I have found specific trends and themes within these materials that have both influenced and been influenced by popular portrayals. These include the use of transgender culture as entertainment and a medium for satisfying non-trans curiosities about transgender people. On the other hand, there are more cultural trends, such as transwomen as a threat to cisgender men as well as an inability to self represent when it comes to transgender issues. Critiquing the methods and trends in the mediums I have investigated allows for a better understanding of their affects on trans culture and how it is perceived by broader America. After researching these popular representations, I conclude that while visibility of transgender issues has certainly increased, the attitudes and underlying phobias about transgendered people have largely gone unchanged.

## Background

## Lily From workshop over introduction

### Intro notes:

- add more info.
- Spell everything out → tell not show
- \* - include significance - how does it relate to central course themes?
  - ↳ Strength of media + how it can affect groups of people
  - media control → sources?
    - ↳ Spec. Western Culture
  - integrate existing literature
- \* - expand on trends/themes, include authors
  - maybe contrasting
  - "Some scholars argue this... other argue this..."
- \* - go more into what you'll specifically be talking about

# Sam Research Proposal

Sean

2/14/2011  
POLS 196B: Sex and Politics  
Professor A  
Research Proposal

## Porn Wars

Essay Question: What is the government's role (function in determining how citizens access and/or produce pornography? Interesting question! access pornography?

The current politics surrounding the issue of pornography are varied as they contain multiple perspectives on whether or not the government has the right to criminalize pornography. Ranging from feminist, to religious, and finally to libertarian, the battle over the legislation of porn has been debated from as early as the 1960s when social movements began discussing it. Leaders of feminist organizations such as Jill Radford have argued that pornography sexualizes our current patriarchal society through idealizing a man's dominance over a woman. Thus by allowing porn to continue to be produced, it would allow for the further degradation of the status of women and thus should be considered a hate-crime.

Although pornography does contain imagery that may seem offensive to some groups, it is not within the power of the government to restrict access to such material as it would negatively affect a person's First Amendment rights through limiting their ability to freely publish material or it would negatively affect their freedom of speech.

This essay will touch on these controversial ideas that are part of the battle over pornography while also addressing other issues such as the legality of cyber-rights, notable court cases such as Miller v. California, the varied perspectives from opposing groups; feminists v. libertarians, and different actions provided by the Federal

# Prof. A's Response to Sam's Proposal

Dear

The conflict over pornography in the modern era is a terrific topic for a research paper. You've clearly thought a lot about the subject; both your explanation and your sources indicate that.

At the moment, though, you're not really proposing a research paper. You're proposing a persuasive essay. That is, you already know what you think; you're going to try to convince me that you're right. Writing a persuasive essay is an important skill, but it's not the one I'm trying to foster in this class. Instead, I'm pushing students to pose, research, and answer a question for which they don't already know the answer.

Let me suggest some alterations to your question.

- If you're into political theory, you might explore the various sets of arguments about government's regulation of pornography and tie them to larger theories of government. What would Rawls, or Mill, or Locke, or Marx, or Rousseau say?
- If you're into constitutional law, you might explore some current legal battles (there's a really interesting set of questions involving so-called "virtual" child porn.) You might try to figure out how the courts might rule given existing legal precedents.
- Alternately, you might consider how the internet has altered the terrain of battles over pornography. (This would fall under Rubin's argument that new technologies can inspire people to change existing sexual hierarchies.)
- If you're interested in modern political battles, you might try to figure out why tensions over pornography have waxed and waned in recent years. (I don't think we've had a really big explosion on the issue since the 1980s. But that was big.)

My sense is that you don't have a pre-existing answer to any of these questions. If you're don't like any of them, you're welcome to reframe your topic in a different fashion. And, of course, you're welcome to meet with me to talk about any aspect of this project.

Take care,  
Professor A

# Sam's Introduction to his Final Paper

## Essay Question:

What is the government's role in determining how citizens are able to access pornographic material?

The politics surrounding the issue of pornography have always been controversial; does a person have a right to access porn? That question is debatable but it is not the point of discussion for this essay, rather the focus will be concerning how the government has used its power in allowing a person's access to pornography. In what ways has the government provided citizens with this freedom and in what ways has it not? The history of pornographic material within a U.S. political context has more ups and downs than any roller coaster ride combined; it is these volatile changes from prohibiting the distribution of porn to allowing it which will be explored. How were these changes possible, who fought for them and who didn't? Many debates concerning the legality of porn vary as each group either in favor or opposition has delivered different theories on why pornography is either good or bad. Political officials have engaged in these debates for years now and although much of the public remains divided on the issue, the fact remains that it is have been the central U.S. government's powers which have provided citizens with the ability to view and engage in the production of pornography.

In the late nineteenth century, pornography according to the Hicklin Test was deemed as obscene libel. But what exactly did this mean? The Hicklin Test was a new approach in identifying what was and was not harmful or immoral material that could

## **Anne's Research Paper: "Interracial Relationships In America"**

**Anne's research question, from her final paper (as suggested by Professor A.):**

This paper will work to examine the reasons why public opinion of interracial relationships is still very touchy subject matter and why people are still hesitant in entering interracial relationships.

**Sample paragraph from Anne's paper:**

Moving on to adult interactions between people of different races, as we go into a more mature standpoint, the question then changes. The idea of dating interracially now involves having sexual relationships with a person from a different race. In the article Interracial Relationships and the Transition into Adulthood, scholars Kara Joyner, from the Cornell University, and Grace Kao, from the University of Pennsylvania, examined a number of surveys conducted by the ADD Health and NHSLS organizations. The purpose of these surveys was to which were designed to examine peoples past sexual relationships and the race of their previous sex partners. They were conducted between the late 1990's and the early 2000's, making them fairly recent with regard to time. The information discovered was that as people age, their number of interracial relationships decreases. From the data collected in an NHSLS survey, younger Hispanic people (ages 22-25) lead in the amount of interracial relationships with 37.5% saying they had been in an interracial relationship, but the difference in percentage between age groups was not that drastic, while Whites came in last in all the age group categories. In data collected by an ADD Health survey, once again the young Hispanic group (ages 18-19) lead with 44.9 % of the people surveyed saying they were currently in or had been in a interracial sexual relationship, and the numbers decreased as age increased, but it wasn't such a drastic difference. And again, the White group came out with the least number of interracial relationships, decreasing further so as age increased. The scholars also found that in more recent years, people would date interracially more often than actually marrying interracially. In my opinion, I believe this occurs because as people age, they are more likely to be focusing on marriage rather than dating casually. With that being said, the older age groups would want to find someone they believe have similar attributes as they do, in order to prevent divorce. This could be why as people age, their amount of interracial relationships decreases as well.

# Tracy Introduction to Final Paper

## Review of the Efficacy of Abstinence-Only and Comprehensive Sex Education Programs in US Schools and Understanding the Factors Surrounding their Implementation and Maintenance

*excellent intro paragraph*

~~According to the Guttmacher Institute, the average age of first sexual intercourse among~~ American adolescents is 17 ("Facts on American Teens"). This is about the same age as individuals in other developed nations. Yet the United States boasts one of the highest rates of teenage pregnancy among similarly developed nations (Arnett 266). Seventy-nine percent of U.S. females and 87% of males report using some sort of contraception the first time they had sexual intercourse, but these rates are significantly lower than those of European countries. The incidence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among American adolescents and young adults is also staggering. Though 15-24 year olds represent 25% of the sexually active population, they account for almost 50% of the new STI cases each year ("Facts").

Problem

Most American adults agree on the need for sex education for teenagers and young adults. However, the nature of such education programs has been hotly debated. The differences between programs are based largely on underlying ideologies about adolescent and (unmarried) young adult sex. Abstinence-only programs work under the belief that most forms of sexual relations are only appropriate within marriage or long-term, adult relationships. Comprehensive programs, which teach both abstinence as well as contraceptive measures emphasize neither abstinence nor birth control methods but provide information on both. They are based on the idea that adolescents may choose whether or not to engage in sex but should have enough information to make an informed decision.

Context

This paper investigates the effectiveness of different types of sex education programs in the United States, focusing primarily on abstinence-only and comprehensive. It also reviews some of the reasons why effective programs have and have not been implemented into schools and communities as well as other factors which influence adolescent sexuality. It is important to

Purpose

understand which type of program is most effective in order to use funding properly. However,



as Kristen Luker points out, measuring the efficacy of sex education programs is not an easy task, as different groups may define effectiveness in varying terms (244). For a religious conservative, a program is only effective if it delays the onset of first experience of sexual intercourse until marriage. Other conservatives may agree that sex education should wait until an individual has reached young adulthood and is in a long-term and loving relationship. On the other hand, American liberals focus on reducing the risks associated with sex, such as transmission of STIs and teenage and/or unwanted pregnancy. Proponents of abstinence-only programs would agree with the aims of this risk-reduction model, but stress that delaying sex until marriage is the best way to achieve these goals. They also often fear that describing contraceptive methods will increase sexual behavior. Risk-reductionists may agree that abstinence is the most effective strategy of reducing the risks of sexual intercourse, but they don't see this as a viable solution for every U.S. teenager.

Challenge :  
defining  
efficacy

Because conservatives agree with the aims of a risk-reduction model, and for the purposes of having a single definition of "efficacy" in order to review programs objectively, effectiveness of sex education programs will be operationalized as programs associated with delaying the age of first sexual intercourse, preventing the spread of STIs, and preventing teenage pregnancies. Programs are also measured for negative effects; for example, does providing information increase sexual behavior? Delaying the onset of first sexual intercourse is effective because it lessens the chances of an individual acquiring an STI or getting pregnant at a younger age. Further, some studies have shown early onset of sexual experiences to be associated with internalizing disorders such as depression, specifically in girls (Arnett 261). STIs are a more obvious health issue, and unfortunately new cases occur disproportionately in adolescents and young adults. Finally, teenage pregnancy is often assumed to be unwanted

Operational  
Definition  
of efficacy

## Assignment Review Process

Previous experience with WID mentors reveals that clarity of expectations regarding assignments is crucial for the design of the mentor plan. This sheet provides a set of questions intended to help you reflect on the nature of the assignment(s) you are planning. As you clarify what you expect and why, you set yourself up to create an effective plan for how the WID mentor can support your students.

1. Assignment name:

*If you chose a general name (research paper, paper, essay), try to describe the type of writing more specifically:*

How does this assignment connect to ways of writing and/or thinking in your field?

2. Describe specific features of this type of writing. What expectations do you have for

the introduction :

the conclusion:

the organization:

the format :

types of sources/evidence to be used:

3. Who is the audience for the paper?

4. How would you describe the role and/or voice of the writer in the paper?

5. What is the purpose of the paper for its intended audience (not your purpose for assigning it, or what skills the student will develop in writing it, but what role it should serve for its readers)?

6. How or when will students see any examples of this type of writing?

7. Describe how class discussions or other activities help students understand the expectations of the assignment.