

This paper will be, as the title suggests, an analysis of a contemporary cultural phenomenon (CCP). This is a very broad category; here are some things it might include: a popular song / musician / band; summer blockbusters; iOS7, Android, flat design; pumpkin spice everything; #hashtags; Commander Hadfield's social media presence; a television series; a movie; @horse\_ebooks; fried fair food; Crossfit; Instagram / Snapchat / Vine; the "new" iPhone; mass shootings.

Because this is an analysis—a "detailed examination or study"—I expect you to be critical and self-reflective. It is possible, necessary even, to think critically about things that you enjoy, and to think about *why* you enjoy the things you enjoy and why you dislike the things you dislike.

Because this is an analysis, again: you will need to read widely about the CCP you've chosen. Keep track of everything you read (a citation manager, like Zotero, can be very useful), and include a comprehensive "works consulted" list with your final paper.

Because this is about a CCP, your analysis should address the broader cultural significance of the particular thing you're writing about. Kanye West, pumpkin spice lattes, gold iPhones, the Navy Yard shooting: these things don't exist in a vacuum. How are they shaped by the culture, and how do they shape the culture?

Because I want you to think carefully and explicitly about organization and structure, this paper will be written as an outline. Both the introduction and conclusion should be full paragraphs, in prose. The outline should be substantial, and the top-level arguments ought to be in complete sentences. There should be at least three levels of subordination. In addition to the primary, top-level argument that you're making, the outline should include supporting claims, evidence drawn from your sources, and commentary on that evidence. Anticipating and addressing objections to your argument may also be useful.

There are several mechanical/formatting requirements:

- Your paper, exclusive of bibliography, should be between 1,000 and 1,300 words.
- Your bibliography should include a minimum of ten items, from a variety of sources.
- Your paper should conform to MLA format (see section 6.29 of *A Writer's Resource*).
- You should use a plain, professional typeface — Times New Roman, Helvetica, &c.
- Your paper should have one-inch margins on all sides.
- Your paper should have an interesting title.
- Pages after the first should be numbered, and your last name should appear in the header or footer with the page number.

Both a paper copy (brought to class) and an electronic copy (submitted by email) of your paper are due by the start of class on Wednesday, October 16. Late work will be accepted but penalized.