

Major Assignment: Paper (s) for COMN 2312/9

General intro:

A paper in COMN 2312/9 is a research opportunity.

It is your opportunity to personalize the course through the choice of a topic to research. It is also your opportunity to then process and present this research to yourself and others – to learn and help us learn about your interests - through the medium of writing. As writing is a medium important to success at university, and in many professions – it is also an opportunity to practice this skill.

Whether you are working with a 6 or 9 credit load, the paper is a major assignment and as such it should reflect an investment from you time wise, interest-wise, planning-wise, editing-wise, research-wise. Your T.As' will be looking for this investment in evaluating your paper.

I. General facts:

This paper is to be 10 pages long, 1.5 spacing with a 10 or 12 point font. Paper reference and citing style is that used by the York Department of Communications¹

II. General Description of Assignment Phases:

This is a course on information, technology and society and the paper is your chance to personalize the course with research in your area of interest:

Phase 1: Choice of focus/topic

Phase 2: Initial research:

Phase 3: More specific and focused research

Phase 4: Sorting through research to analyze, learn and to decide what will go in paper

Phase 5 Write paper/ Edit paper/Write Paper/Edit paper/Write paper

Phase 6. Share paper with someone (tutorial?) – receive input and use to edit paper

Phase 7: Finalize paper

¹ *It is okay to go over this length (somewhat) for reasons pertaining to good research or good writing (but be careful as many students go over a paper length due to neither of these).*

It is not okay to go under (unless in very very exceptional circumstances where it is very clear that it is due to good research and good writing).

III. Specific Paper Info:

Phase 1 -Topic Choice: You are to select and research a topic or question of interest in our subject area information/technology/society. You may chose from the foci below:

- A. A technology²*
- B. A theorist³*
- C. An issue⁴*
- D. An event⁵*
- E. "Potent object"⁶ (as explained in class field note project)*
- F. You may also chose another topic as long as you approve it with your TA*

Phase 2- Initial research: Using the general inquiry question: "what does this topic have to do with information/technology/society?"

- a. The research project should begin with a general exploration of the relationship of the topic choice to information, technology and society. Student can use images, videos, articles and Google searches - in addition to searches using e-resources and other York library resources.*
- b. The general research phase should expose the student to the history connected to the topic and should focus on the topic's connection with our key words: information, technology and society. Student may find it helpful to put the topic words in a search engine in combination with the words information + society + technology. You should somehow document what you find. You may need this info.⁷*

² A technology could be a technological object (examples: the empire state building, your cell phone, the pencil, Microsoft word, the radio, the telescope, a Levitt town house, railroads, a shopping mall, the car, sdram, robotic storage, library e resource system, joystick, remote control device) or a technological process (examples: printing, making plastic, drilling for oil, developing a cure; tracking a gene, distributing tv shows)

³ You need to approve your theorist with your TA. An choice could be someone covered in readings or lectures, or an author of one of the readings.

⁴ You need to approve your issue with your TA.

⁵ Examples: the gulf oil spill this summer, the landing on the moon, the flooding in Pakistan this summer, the Toronto mayor's election, 911, the Vancouver Olympics

⁶ Object here is meant to connote how something is used in the mind to provoke thought. This will be explained more in the field notes assignment.

⁷ This documentation will be useful when you return to organize your findings, make choices about what to pursue. It will also be helpful if issues related to academic integrity arise.

- c. *Initial research transition “Beginning to focus: Students should look for their interests in this topic - but also research these five areas in gathering info around their topic:*
 - i. *Its relationship to media and communication*
 - ii. *Its relationship to consumption, market, marketing and economy*
 - iii. *Its historical development*
 - iv. *Its future implications*
 - v. *Its relationship to the human body & and bodies, to human sensory system and human dimensionality and to human aesthetic interests and needs*

Phase 3: More specific focus + specific inquiry question:

Students should look over their general research and start to focus and identify a particular area of interest. It is recommended that they narrow this interest down to an inquiry question that has arisen and become of interest to them. Often times this question has occurred internally (through certain choices of materials or images) and the student just needs to go back and identify the question. Student should check this question out to make sure there is enough material to support it. Students should share and clarify the question with others – most especially with their TA. Students should write this question out and from now on all their research should connect to this inquiry question. Remember: This inquiry question needs to be on track with information/technology/society as an area of interest

Phase 4: Sorting, Analyzing & Deciding (what will go in this paper): If students have found a great research topic – they may have found lots of material! They may have discovered an area that will interest them for their life and may even become their graduate research project! If they are a nine credit student – they may have found enough material for two papers. Thus students will need to realize that not everything they have found will go in the paper. Students should sit with the materials and decide what will go in the paper.

- A. *The paper should include a general description of the above processes – especially describing how did you got to your research question?*
- B. *And then the research question - All the materials in the paper should connect to the research question from there on after*

Phase 5: Write/Edit

Phase 6: Share/Edit

Phase 7: Finalize and hand in