

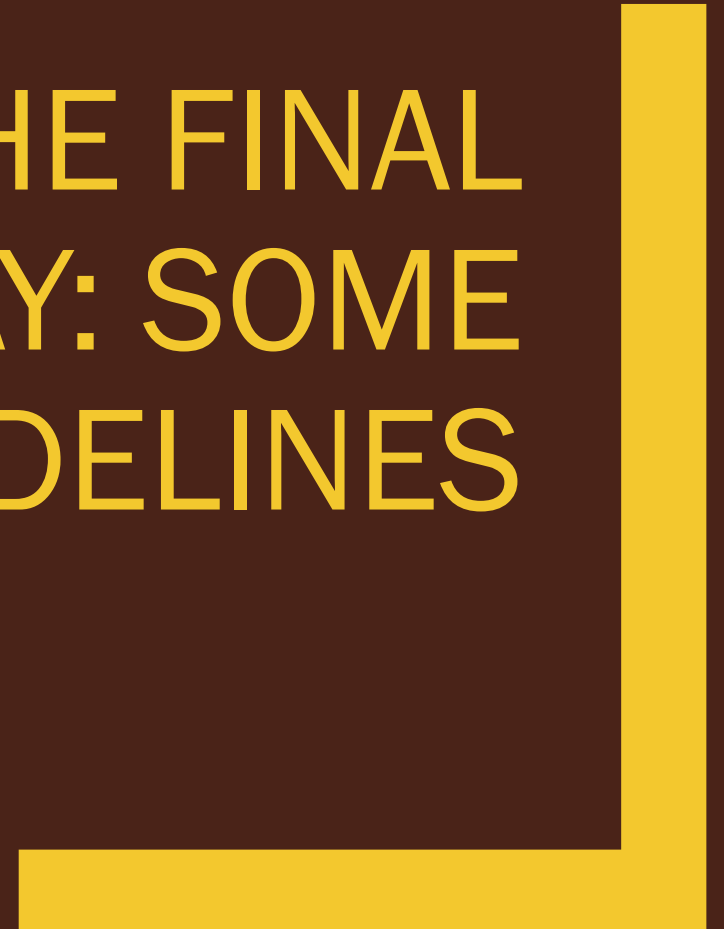
STRUCTURING THE FINAL EXAM ESSAY: SOME GUIDELINES

Popular Culture SINQ Mentored Inquiry

Mentor: Ellorashree Maitra

PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY

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Core Components of your essay

- Introduction
- Body paragraphs (2-3 should be fine for a 1000-word essay)
- Conclusion
- Works Cited list (MLA format)

The Introduction “introduces” the following

The topic of your essay

The two sources you will be using (provide the titles of the essays and the author names) to discuss the topic

The popular culture example that you will be using as your “lens” for talking about the ideas presented in the two sources and your perspective on the topic

A brief explanation of why you picked these sources and this particular popular culture example to discuss this topic. Why are these sources/example relevant to the topic?

Body Paragraph Structure and components

- State the main topic/idea that you will be discussing in the paragraph
- Provide supporting evidence (quotes) for the topic/idea from one or both of your sources.
- Evaluation of quote/idea with the help of your popular culture example.

The Conclusion

- Sums up the key points you have made about the topic in the essay.
- Highlights the significance of the topic.
- Tells us what new thing you have learned about the topic or what your main takeaways are.

Side note: Making use of effective transitions

- Ideally, each body paragraph should close with a transition sentence that prepares us for the new topic you will discuss in the next paragraph. For example, if you are writing about fashion and social media, in one paragraph you might talk about how fashion trends have had a negative impact on body image due to social media. In the next paragraph you might want to delve deeper into one particular example of this deleterious impact of social media/fashion trends, OR you can pivot to talking about how social media has also helped to launch the resistance to certain trends or have allowed for the re-framing of body image discourse in more positive and equitable ways. You are free to take your argument in whatever direction seems most interesting to you. BUT:
- As you make your case in successive paragraphs, make sure to gently guide your reader through the turns of your argument.
- Transition sentences or even transition words help you to do this. See the handout on Transition Words and Phrases for more on this topic.

GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR
FINAL EXAM ESSAYS

