Writing and Rhetoric

Assignment 2: The Research Paper

For your second assignment, I would like you to write a research paper that engages one of the topics addressed in our readings (a topic that is, ideally, one for which you have some personal interest). They may include the following:

- Social media (Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, Facebook, etc.)
- Information technology and literacy (internet and search bias, fake news, post-truth discourse communities, etc.)
- General technology (the internet, digital apps, smartphones, A.I., VR, automation, etc.)

For your paper, I ask you to incorporate at least **four** secondary sources into your analysis. At least **one** (but no more than **two**) of those secondary sources should be one of the articles we read in class; the others should be from articles you have researched yourself. Your primary goal with the research is to engage with the *arguments* and *ideas* of other scholars and writers rather than use them for background or evidence (the "A" of BEAM over the "B" and "E," though you are free to incorporate all four). You are entering into a scholarly conversation; therefore, use the claims of others to hone in on key issues and position your own original argument in relation to them. Stand on the shoulders of giants to see further.

Learning outcomes:
1) To identify a current **scholarly conversation** and enter that conversation with an **interventional** thesis for the purposes of producing **new knowledge**
2) To discern **credible** and **scholarly** secondary sources (and to cultivate and exhibit **ethically-minded practices** regarding the evaluation all sources)
3) To be able to **clearly and fairly incorporate** the ideas and claims of others into your paper
4) To practice **accurate and consistent citation** of outside sources

Assessment will be based on the following:
1) Strength of **thesis**, one that is debatable, interventional, nuanced and specific; positioning your argument within an ongoing **scholarly conversation**
2) Clear incorporation of **outside sources** that are adequately contextualized, accurately represented, and sufficiently explained, interpreted, and integrated back into your own argument (use **quote sandwich**); **counterclaims** and **naysayers** fully addressed
3) Demonstration of ability to discern **credible** and **scholarly** sources
4) Strength of **evidence** and **analysis**, both of the primary and secondary materials, illustrating *how* and *why* your evidence supports your claims
5) **Organization**: paper driven by claims *then* evidence (**MEAL plan**); clear **transitions**
6) Accurate and consistent **formatting of citations**, in a convention style of your choosing
7) **Grammar and usage**, with minimal issues that might interfere with clarity of expression

Remember to consider your audience – a general, educated audience interested in your analysis but who requires enough context about the primary and secondary texts to understand the argument.

Writing and Rhetoric

Paper Guidelines:
- Page length: 7 to 8 pages (no more than 10)
- Times New Roman, 12 pt.
- Double-spaced
- 1-inch margins
- Titled, with Works Cited page (properly formatted in the convention style of your choosing)

Due dates:
Initial idea(s): **Tuesday, Feb. 18th, for class**
In-class presentation: **Thursday, March 5th, for class** (more info. to come)
First draft: **Friday, March 20th, by 11:59 p.m. EST**
Second draft: **Sunday, March 29th, by 11:59 p.m. EST**

Please save your document as follows: [First name] [Last name] – Paper 2, Draft 1

Please deliver papers as a Google Doc in our shared Google Drive Folder

In the past, strong theses have been developed around topics as wide-ranging as:

- Big data and privacy
- Therapeutic robots and VR (virtual reality)
- The long history of "fake news"
- Algorithmic racial bias
- Dog Instagram
- FOMO
- Addictive game design and game theory
- Social media and the wedding industrial complex
- Finsta and Rinsta accounts
- Persuasive design in social media apps
- TikTok and imitation as art
- The (im)morality of memes