

Research/Creative Nonfiction Major Paper

engl 281 / sec. B / autumn quarter 2011-12 / chang

When asked about where he gets his story ideas from, John McPhee responds, “Curiosity...and serendipity” (as qtd. in Berkes). For your end-of-term major paper, your capstone to a quarter of writing challenges met and overcome, you will find something you are curious about, you will identify a topic worth researching, and hopefully, you will discover by chance something you never knew—about the subject at hand and about yourself as a writer. For inspiration, look back on all that you have done. *Your readings. Class discussion. Research.* Think about the writing you have done. *Exposition. Research proposal. Annotated bibliography. Interview.* Finally, consider your own life, your own experiences, and your own hobbies and interests. These are all entrances that lead you to possible topics. Select a good one, one that was approved from your research proposal memo. You will then generate a 6-8 page paper: either a conventional, academic research paper or a McPhee-esque researched creative nonfiction paper. The best papers will: be about a narrow topic; provide a clear exigence and specific argument (claim); use telling details, evidence, and support; demonstrate coherence and organization; draw on timely and relevant research (6-8 sources); address a general academic audience; and do more than just list facts and figures (analysis).

Guidelines and Due Dates

Format: 6-8 pages, typed, no title page, double-spaced, proper heading, MLA citations & bibliography

Due: Monday, December 12, as part of the Final Portfolio

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