

# CLS 101/201US, *Knowledge and Community*

Fall 2014 – TR 1:40=2:55PM – Section 026 – Maher

## Final Paper and Oral Presentation

**Paper Assignment:** Each student will conceive, plan, and write a formal final paper. The goals are for you to develop an interesting position, make connections between at least two of the course texts plus our final reading, “Better,” and argue your case with solid reasons and evidence from the texts.

### FINAL PAPER PROMPT:

One of the themes from Atul Gawande’s book “Better” is the *positive deviant*: an individual who somehow strives to make a *worthy difference*. This is an important outcome from this course: what do we, as educated people, need to do with the information, skills, and insights we gain from our college studies? What is our obligation to those around us in our community? What strategies are available to get beyond the bell curve average?

Using connections and references drawn from at least two of our prior readings AND Gawande, write a final essay expressing recommended strategies for becoming the positive deviant. Make a clear claim regarding the ability or necessity of individuals making this effort, and use examples drawn from this course. This is NOT to be your unsupported opinions! Use the good writing techniques and claim evaluation that we have been expecting throughout the course.

The last week of class (right after Thanksgiving) we will have oral presentations in class. Those presentations will be like the mid-term presentations: why did you choose the topic, what new ideas came to you, and what possible opposing views did you consider?

Your paper should be 3-4 pages (about 1000 to 1300 words), prepared with a word processor, double-spaced, and suitable for both electronic uploading to D2L and hardcopy printing. Put your name, date, course and section number on the first page. Don’t forget to title your paper.

- **Final paper assigned:** Thursday, November 13, 2014.
- **Final paper due:** Submit final paper via D2L dropbox by 5PM on Tuesday, December 2, 2014.
- **Oral presentations:** in class on Tuesday, December 2, 2014, and on Thursday, December 4, 2014.

### **A strong paper will do the following:**

- Respond thoughtfully to course texts and class discussion
- Take a stance and support it
- Consider an objection to that stance and respond to it
- Suggest a solid understanding of the texts being discussed
- Take into account differing perspectives from the readings and from class discussion
- Explore new ideas and thinking
- Be ambitious and take risks
- Have few grammatical and spelling errors and meet the length requirement

**Strategies for revising your argument:** Write a draft of your paper and plan to revise it. Revision works best if you leave some time between drafting and revising. Then you can reread the draft critically and try to imagine what questions your audience will have. As you reread your draft for revision, imagine an audience that will be asking, “I wonder why she thinks that?” If you ask yourself that question, you may get additional ways to develop your ideas and support your claim.

One of the most powerful tools for revising is *reading your draft out loud*. If you have never done this as part of the revision process, you will be amazed at how well this works. Don't forget to proofread your paper and correct spelling and other errors.

**The Writing Center** has tutors who can go over your draft with you and help you develop, organize, revise and learn to edit it. The Writing Center also has computers you can use for writing papers.

The Writing Center is located in Wilson 1-114. Call 994-5315 for an appointment.

**Oral Presentation Assignment:** You will make a short presentation about your final paper in answer to the question:

- “Why did you choose this topic?” and/or
- “What new ideas came to you while writing the paper?” and/or
- “Explain opposing views you considered in writing your paper.”

You should address your remarks specifically to the members of our seminar. You may comment on issues that have been raised in seminar discussions. You may use note cards or an outline, but do not write out your presentation and do not read a written text. Your presentation should be a continuation of your conversation in the seminar. Seminar members may ask you questions about the ideas you present.

The presentation should be about four minutes long with an additional minute for questions from the audience.

**Criteria for Evaluating the Final Presentations:**

- Suggests a thoughtful answer to the question(s) under discussion
- Shows speaker commitment (interest, engagement, care)
- Uses a clear, straight-forward style to communicate (speaks in a clear, audible voice, looks at the audience, keeps the audience's interest, and meets the time requirement)