**Considering Purpose and Genre for Writing Assignments**

I. REFLECTION/COMMUNITY-BUILDING

**News Consumer Autobiography (~3 pp.):** In this paper, you’ll reflect on your own experiences as a “consumer” of news media. In addition to describing some of your habits, preferences, and viewpoints, you’ll consider the question: Am I a ‘typical’ Millennial (or Gen Z?) consumer? (You’ll compare your experiences with trends documented in research we’ll be reading in class).

**Writer Reflection** (3-5 pp.): For this final piece of writing, you will reflect on your relationship to academic literacy, using readings and experiences from our course as evidence. You will develop a thesis statement about yourself as an academic reader and writer, referencing Paper 3 (and possibly your research log) to support that statement. You will also integrate at least one of our course readings to contextualize your reflections.

II. ANALYSIS/APPLICATION

**Sociolinguistic Analysis Using Theoretical Framework (4-5 pp.)**In this paper, you will analyze a novel, film, or television show (i.e., a cultural artifact), focusing on how it illustrates or challenges key concepts related to language and social justice. Youwill develop an argumentative essay in which you reference at least 2 outside sources in your Intro/Rationale, explaining why this cultural artifact is worth analyzing**.** You will also reference at least 1 course reading as the theory/framework for your analysis**.**  (In class, we will identify specific concepts you might use in your analysis and practice employing them together.)

**Position Paper (4-5 pp.)-** In this paper, you will take a position on a controversial question that has arisen in our readings and/or class discussion, and will support your position with course readings and/or outside sources, if needed. Possible questions include:

1. Are grammar prescriptivists (and/or “pundits” or “sticklers”) right to place such a high emphasis on grammatical correctness? Is judgment based on grammar/language use ever justified?
2. Is texting (or another media trend) ruining the English language?
3. How important and useful is politically-correct and/or gender-inclusive language?

(You could also take a position on one of the other arguments made by Curzan or Cameron.)

**Sociolinguistics Scrapbook*-*** This is a project that you will work on throughout the semester, in which you collect and reflect on **8-10 “artifacts**” that are connected to our class. An artifact could be a news article (print or online), media clip, literary text, live event, or even an account of a conversation. Artifacts can be drawn from your other classes as well. For each artifact, you will write a paragraph (less than one page) reflection that explains why you chose this artifact and how it relates to sociolinguistics.

III. RESEARCH/DATA-GATHERING

**Secondary (library) Research Paper** - For this paper (**6-8 pp.),** you will develop a narrow research question to explore related to our course theme. Your goal will be to synthesize (not just summarize) the research on that question, and to discuss why the findings are significant to our understanding of language and social justice. Possible topics for this assignment will be provided in class. This project will allow you to build up your research skills, including skills in finding and evaluating sources, incorporating quotes and examples effectively into your writing, and citing appropriately (APA style). You will complete a number of smaller assignments to help “scaffold” the writing process, including a project proposal, an annotated bibliography, an outline or planning draft, and a Writer’s Memo. You will also give a short (8-10 min) oral presentation on your findings.

**Primary research (shorter, 4-5 pp.)-** The goal of this project is to give you an opportunity to deepen your course learning through primary research. NOTE: This is **NOT** a library research project, in which you summarize findings from secondary sources (other people’s research/argument). Rather, it requires that you **gather original data** via a Survey (minimum 10 participants) or Interviews (minimum 3 participants). The goal of your data collection/analysis will be to answer a *specific question* about grammar usage or attitudes among Middlebury students, faculty, or staff. You may work with a partner on this project, but will write an individual report, including:

1. What did you do for your research and Why? (Rationale and Methods)  
2. What did you expect to find? (Hypothesis)  
3. What did you actually find? What are the implications of your findings?  
4. What did you learn overall from doing this project? (Reflection)

**Primary research (longer, 10-15 pp.)-**The purpose of this project is to give you the opportunity to engage firsthand in sociolinguistics research. You will develop a narrow and relevant research question that ties in to our course material. To answer your question, you may **analyze existing linguistic data**, such as texts or transcripts. Or, you may design a survey or interview protocol, to **examine** **attitudes** about language variation and/or use. Whichever option you choose, you need to have a systematic method for analysis, so you’re not “cherry-picking” from the data. Your final paper (10-15 pp.) will include an Introduction and Rationale for the project (3-4 pp, citing course readings and/or outside sources), a description of Hypothesis and Methods (1-2 pp.), and a Summary and Discussion of Findings (6-8 pp.).

IV. CREATIVE/SYNTHETIC

**Writing Beyond the Classroom**- For this project, you are asked to write for a public audience. You will design a writing project that outlines a need or concern or illustrates a key issue from the class. You will write a short **Proposal** explaining your choice of issue, intended audience, and proposed format. After receiving feedback, you will develop drafts of the writing that will be workshopped in class (see possibilities below). When you submit the final draft, you will reflect on the choices you made as a writer in your **Introduction** (1-2 pages) and **Writer’s Memo.**

Possibilities for this project include *editorial, letter to officials or other authorities, informational brochure/website, speech transcript, creative nonfiction essay, short story, play, poetry/spoken word*, **and many more…** You are encouraged to draw on your other linguistic resources in this project, including creative writing skills and proficiencies in other languages. ☺