

**Paper #1**  
*My Major in its Social Context*

**Purpose:** To present an argument justifying your choice of a college major to an audience of California and United States taxpayers.

**Length:** 1250 words minimum (does not include works cited page). Please note that this is a bare minimum length for this assignment and applies to both the complete first draft and the final draft. I will not accept a submission that does not meet this bare minimum requirement. I strongly encourage you to compose a first draft that substantially exceeds this minimum. The best final essays emerge from a process that involves some paring down of a complete first draft.

**Due Dates:** full-length draft (1/14); peer critique (1/16); final draft (1/21)

**Required Format:** MLA (I will not accept incorrectly formatted papers). Please see the sample MLA formatted paper available on the web at the following address:

<http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/modeldocs/humanities.htm>

**Portfolio:** You will submit all invention, research, planning, peer critique, and drafting activities in your portfolio on the final due date. You will also email a final draft to me during the class period on the due date (so bring the paper to class on a disk).

**Research Documentation:** You must complete a “Works Cited” list for all sources used and correctly cite and quote, summarize, or paraphrase those sources in your essay. In your portfolio binder, you must include printouts or copies of all specific pages, passages, quotes, statistics, etc. used from your sources. You must also highlight the sections or paragraphs that you used from these source pages.

**Description:** In this essay, you will argue for your choice of college major. You will write your essay to a specific audience: the taxpayers of California and the United States who subsidize your college education. And in your essay you will explore personal and social reasons that support your argument.

**Grading Criteria**

- 1) a clear, arguable, and qualified thesis,
- 2) plausible reasons (that address both personal and social reasons for your chosen major) and convincing support (that includes convincing and correctly documented research),
- 3) effective anticipation of opposing positions and objections,
- 4) essay and paragraph organization,
- 5) sentence style and word choice,
- 6) grammar, punctuation, spelling

**Conferences:** I strongly recommend (but do not require) that you visit me during office hours while you are working on this first paper. I have office hours from 12:30-3:00 on M/W/F, but I am available to meet with you at almost any time (other than class times) on those days. *Please take advantage of this resource.*

**Penalties:** I apply a 10% penalty for each class day that a final draft is late. I will deduct 10% for each writing process activity that is not completed and submitted in your portfolio. I will not accept for credit any draft that does not reach the minimum word count.