

Research and Reflection Papers

The purpose of research papers in the Ethics and Values course is to both help satisfy our CLO's for the class, but also to teach the students important critical thinking skills, essential research skills, and writing skills. Reflection papers are also important, given one objective of the course is to invite students to clarify their own values, become more understanding of other values, and to create a stronger foundation and greater character strength upon which they can build their lives.

The example above under Group Projects and Presentations gave excellent directions for writing a research paper. Here are two examples of directions for writing both a self-reflection paper and a comparison paper.

Self-Reflection Paper:

We know that when you live your life on a daily basis in a way that is congruent with your own examined sense of who you are and what you want to accomplish in life, and in harmony with your core values, then you will live a happier, more joyful life. You will be able to meet life's challenges and difficult moments with greater self-confidence, emotional resilience, cheerfulness, and love. But you need to clarify your own sense of vision, purpose, and values.

In your paper you will need to respond to the following four prompts:

1. What kind of a person do you want to be? Write down three qualities you want your future self to possess. Define each trait as you understand it. Explain why each trait is important to you. Explain how each trait will help you cultivate a graceful presence regardless of what happens in your life. (Vision)
2. What do you want the consequence of your life to be, your life's legacy? Write down three accomplishments you hope to achieve in your life. Be as specific as possible: how will you know you've achieved them. What must you do today and this year to achieve each goal? How will each achievement contribute to your overall sense of happiness and wellbeing? How will each achievement better help you serve others, community, and the world? What are some obstacles you'll face in achieving your goals and how will you respond to each obstacle in order to achieve your purposes? (Purpose)
3. What kind of relationships do you want to have? Write down three qualities you want all your relationships to possess and define each quality. (Values)
4. What is the most important thing in life to you? Write down the one thing you will live your life for, and how it relates to the prompts above? (Values)

Comparison Paper:

Interview a person from a different background than you: someone with different culture, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, or religious background. This should be a person with whom you don't regularly "hang out," often because of these differences. Ask them to respond to the same prompts you responded to above in your self-reflection paper. In your paper you need to compare their responses with how you responded. Address the similarities and differences between how you and they responded. In your conclusion, be sure to briefly state the significant learnings you can take-away from this comparison essay for how you may better care for the other.

Here are the general guidelines for both papers:

- Double-space the text of your paper and use the font of Times New Roman. The font size should be 12 pt.
- Leave only one space after periods or other punctuation marks.
- Set the margins of your document to 1 inch on all sides.
- The self-reflection paper should be between **1,500 and 2,000 words**.
- The comparison paper should be between **2,500 and 3,500 words**.
- You do not need a title page for your paper.
- In the upper left-hand corner of the first page, list your name, the course name, and the date. Again, be sure to use double-spaced text.
- Double space again and center the title. Do not underline, italicize, or place your title in quotation marks; write the title in Title Case (standard capitalization), not in all capital letters.
- Double space between the title and the beginning of the essay.
- Submit it by the due date on canvas.