

First-Year Seminar (Wilson Section)

Peer Review of Short Paper Assignment #4

(Final paper due by email at the start of class on Friday, November 20, 2015)

Peer review is an essential component of professional writing, especially for manuscripts intended for a public audience. It is a way to both catch errors of content and form and to test ideas with a colleague. It depends on the dedication of the reviewer to the task, and the willingness of the author to take and use constructive criticism. You are about to sample the delights of having a fellow student give you advice on your Short Paper #4.

First your pairing (and one tripling!):

<u>Partner #1</u>	<u>Partner #2</u>	<u>Partner #3</u>
Gore, Will	Walls, Harrison	
Hartzell, Matt	Sringeri, Aditi	
Howell, Ellie	Shore, Isaac	
Iannuzzi, Eva	Rogers, Kenzie	
Kim, Amy	Ro, Lea	
Klein, Andrew	Rankin, James	
Lyon, Zach	Murphy, Kass	Mierkamili, Mijiti

And then your peer-reviewing assignment:

1. In class on Friday morning, I'll ask each of you to email as an attachment your paper to your partner or partners. So Will and Harrison send each other their papers, Matt and Aditi, and so on.
2. Over the weekend please read your partner's paper or papers, preparing any comments, corrections and ideas to give to them on Monday in class.
3. On Monday each pair (and the one triplet) will be given space and time to exchange observations about each other's work. Use your laptops to edit your paper on the spot, or at least to take notes on the comments. We will meet as a class later to assess the process and talk about Why People Believe Weird Things.
4. At the end of your revised paper, please include a paragraph naming your peer reviewer (or reviewers) and what you learned from the peer review. In other words, how did this review change your document? This paragraph is not counted in the 1000 words of the assignment.
5. Your final version of Short Paper #4 is due too me as an email attachment in Word by **8:00 a.m. on Friday, November 20**. Feel free to send it early!

For your convenience, I've repeated the Short Paper #4 assignment on the back of this page.

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Short Paper Assignment #4

It is time to analyze and summarize the conceptual content of this course. We're in the midst of an interesting ride through conspiracy theories, pseudoscience, quack medicines and the like, but the course is nearing its end and we need to start assessing what it all means. Your task with this short paper is to answer this question:

Why do people believe weird things?

Your paper is to be roughly 1000 words and written in the style of a magazine editorial or opinion post on a news website. This means **NO** in-text citations and **NO** reference list. (We use those in our research papers, not creative essays.) Your article is directed to the general public and should be interesting, persuasive and well supported. You may give evidence for your arguments in an informal way by describing conspiracy theories, crank ideas and the like, but without formal citations. Above all, this paper is **YOUR** opinion expressed to the public, so you want to take responsibility for its conclusions. You may interpret "weird things" in any way you choose. As with any editorial, your writing should be designed to persuade efficiently and with style.

This paper is due as an **email attachment in Microsoft Word** by 8:00 a.m. on Friday, November 13.

Other notes about this paper –

1. The **1000 words** or so is an estimate. Don't try to hit it exactly. The text in this assignment sheet is approximately 325 words, so you'll be writing about three times as much.
2. We will have a system of **peer review** of these papers after you turn them in. I will distribute the papers among you for mutual analysis and comments. You will then submit your **final version to me for a grade on Friday, November 20**. Your review of another essay is counted as part of your grade.
3. Remember: late papers are significantly penalized (one grade for every hour late; that first hour starts at 8:00 a.m.).