Pop Culture Research Paper

For this assignment, you will write a 5-6 page essay that explores an issue in popular culture.

Pick a Topic! Be careful, you don’t want too narrow of a topic. For example, writing a paper on the latest Avenger movie might not yield enough historical data. A better choice might be an explanation of the popularity of the Marvel movies.

Find 2 Peer Reviewed Journal Articles (most up to date research) related to your topic.

Find 1 book related to your topic (this should help you with your theme).

Gather Primary Source evidence (lots of it!)

First Assignment: (due Week 11)
- What do you hope to find out about your topic?
- Annotated Bibliography (3 sources)
- List your primary source evidence

Putting Your Paper Together:
What are you arguing? Think about how your topic reflects issues or delivers messages about age, race, gender, class, religion, politics (or another approved topic). For example, “XYZ is popular because _____ ” and the rest of paper proves your argument.

The intention of this assignment is not to simply gather information, but to form an argument and provide a new understanding of the topic. Make sure to answer a WHY.

For example:
I recently read an interesting article about the television show CSI, and how it is disseminating knowledge of forensics that has been impacting jury trials. My questions going into a paper on this topic might be: How does CSI affect jury trials? Why does it affect them? And more importantly, SO WHAT? If I stopped at how and why, I would simply be writing a report, regurgitating the information I gathered from my sources. The crux of the paper is the so what, the synthesis of this information into an argument. What are the ramifications of this for the criminal justice system? Is this something to be embraced or avoided? Is CSI affecting society, or is it actually just reflecting it? What is the result on the viewer?

You might compare a sitcom from twenty years ago to one today, discussing how representations of gender, class, and race have changed and what the larger impact is. You might watch the original version of “Ocean’s 11” with Frank Sinatra and the new “Ocean’s 11” with George Clooney and write a research paper explaining WHY they are different. Or, examine the evolving look of Barbie – again…why has she changed? The possibilities are endless!
Your paper should:

- Not be a report, but an argument that creates a new understanding.
- Be well-organized, with a clearly stated thesis that is threaded throughout.
- Have a clear introduction and conclusion.
- Have concise, focused paragraphs with meaningful transitions.
- Be based on high-quality research from your many primary sources and 2-3 secondary sources. It should include a works cited page in Chicago Style.
- Represent your strongest writing: good language use, grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc.