

## WRT 205: Unit 1 Assignment: Synthesis Essay



This unit, we've discussed what technology is and how it connects to cultural and material contexts. For your project, you will analyze a particular issue through a range of sources and conduct some primary research of your own.

### Project Description

For this project, you will consult secondary sources (from class and beyond) and provide examples “from the wild” using your own primary research to describe an issue connected with technology. You will try to find the main concepts, central arguments, and possible implications relating to this argument from secondary sources, then use primary research to advance your own position. Questions below will help you do this.

This paper should have three main parts. First, I expect an introduction and literature review (3+ sources), giving a sense of the conversation: what are people saying about this issue. The second section would be your own research: interviewing people, analyzing samples online, working (in detail) through your experience, etc. You will tell me what you did and the main results. The third section would be your conclusions and implications. Mainly, you will discuss how your research matches up with what others say, which audiences might benefit from knowing this information, and which genres might you consider in order to present this information to those audiences. To review, then, you should have: (1) introduction and lit review, (2) your primary research, and (3) the conclusion.

Though I have no required length, I would imagine around **1,500 words worth of effort**. That said, this project could take a variety of forms depending on your goal or comfort. It could take the form of a more traditional analytic piece, a blog-like think piece, a thoughtful TED talk video, etc. Any form is fine, as long as you address the central goals.

You must also include a portfolio. Remember, this is any material—past drafts, notes, peer feedback, scratch-work, screen-captures of in-process drafts, pictures of your work space, etc.—that informed your draft. You should also reflect on this work, explaining your process. Please consult the **Project Portfolio** handout for more direction.

## Questions to Consider

Feel free to consider the following questions to help drive the project. You do not need to answer all of them, nor are you limited to them as long as you meet the general design of the assignment:

1. For part one, what are the main “sides” or positions? What are the agreements or disagreements among sources? Do you see any gaps or questions?
2. For part two, what did you do? Why? What were the main findings? (e.g., what did your interview subjects say) What ethical questions did you have?
3. For part three, how did your findings line up or disagree with the conversation? Which audiences might benefit from knowing this information, and why? Which genres might you consider in order to present this information to those audiences, and why? Would you change anything from your approach?

## What I’m Looking For:

	Positive	Negative
Assignment Goals	Actively uses the questions and assignment description. Stays on task. Includes all three sections	Strays away from the assignment focus.
Summation	Includes accurate and relevant summaries—enough information, but not too much—told in clear ways. Gives a sense of the conversation.	Does not engage with sources or does so in ineffective ways. Misrepresents sources. Merely describes or only does surface-level exploration or analysis.
Primary research	Does some form of research that makes sense based on any research questions. Presents findings and considerations.	Does not do research, the research appears light or lazy, or the research does not make sense.
Conclusion	Actively discusses how your research aligns with the ongoing conversation. Notes future questions or concerns that arise.	Does not consider how your research aligns with the conversation.
Sources	Effectively incorporates sources through quotes, summaries, and/or paraphrases. Cites them.	Does not use sources or does so in a shallow, “fly-by” fashion without any meaningful engagement.
Organization	The assignment forms a largely cohesive whole with a clear structure and focused paragraphs.	Lacks cohesion, scattered paragraphs, a lack of structure or throughline.
Grammar and Style	Relatively free of sentence-level or document errors.	Shows obvious lack of proofreading.

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