

21L.021 Revision Guidelines

1000 words

This revision has two objectives: to improve the original essay (editing) and to refine it so that your paper supports a more fully developed thesis (revising). You will need to address both to get the most out of the assignment.

To improve the essay, go over feedback and consider ideas, organization, style, mechanics, and other matters that you think need work. You may even shorten the original paper as you work on pruning wordiness and making the material more succinct and economical. You will also need to re-engage your reader (me!), who now knows the material well. Be sure to make the argument and language more lively, the analysis of examples more exciting, the presentation of facts more vivid. You can also be more selective about what research or supporting materials you offer; decide which details serve your argument best and jettison the others.

If you need to add research, do so thoughtfully.

The second aspect of your revision (and you need not follow this order) will be to refine your original plan in light of your re-reading, new reading, class discussions, and new thinking. Your argument should show that you have given the original thesis new attention, have developed it more fully, and have introduced fresh ideas or examples into the paper. If you summarized or referred to the text before, find passages you can now open up more fully with close reading.

If you decide to change your argument completely, be brave and do it!

Revision does not mean making the first paper perfect but giving it significant new thought, a re-vision of the original project. Enjoy the feeling of tearing your essay apart and rebuilding it. You will produce better results, even if they have a few ragged edges.

As before, supply a correct and responsible list of works cited and quote correctly. Think hard about mechanical errors. Use a reverse outline of your topic sentences to see that they proceed logically, not just chronologically. Give yourself time to print out a hard copy, put it aside for a significant amount of time, and read it afresh before making final tweaks and submitting your NEW, IMPROVED, BEAUTIFUL WORK!!

One last thing: submit your revision with a brief (1-2 paragraphs) **Revision Reflection** in which you explain your efforts and what you think they have achieved.

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