

Major assignment 2: Abstract

The second major assignment is to write an abstract for a paper you plan to write, or one you have written, presenting your own scholarship. Choose a project for which you actually plan to publish a paper. (*Publication* for this purpose can include an international journal, a local journal, or internal publication such as submitting your thesis to the university.)

The length of the abstract and its formatting should follow the requirements of the journal or other outlet where you plan to publish the paper. If you do not have a specific journal in mind yet, follow the style of a prominent journal in your field.

Generally speaking, abstracts for this course will be about one page long.

The abstract must contain a thesis statement: the one or two sentence statement of what the paper is about. The thesis statement should be specific, factual, objective, and non-trivial.

I expect your abstract to give the background of your research or to position your work in your major field. The abstract should state the research question or the purpose of the study. It should describe in general terms the kinds of methods you used or your approach to investigating the idea in the thesis statement. Your results and your conclusions should also be made clear in the abstract.

Abstracts will be judged on the strength and clarity of their logic. In other words: is the thesis statement clearly stated? Is the logical argument specified, and does the abstract explain how and why the premises support the conclusion? Is the data or evidence described clearly? Is there enough evidence to support the conclusion?

Mechanics — the grammar, word choice, spelling, and formatting — do matter a little, but they are less important than the other elements of the abstract. Your main goal is to communicate your thesis statement, your evidence, and your logical argument in a clear and convincing manner. If problems with mechanics

make it hard for a reader to understand that message, that is a problem. If you can fix mistakes, you should. But don't let worries about English distract you from your most important goal: to communicate your research findings.

Please ask the instructor if you have any questions.