



Resources for Case Writers

Preamble. This situates the assignment within the context of the course and reminds students of what they have been working on in anticipation of the assignment.

As we have seen throughout the course of the semester, improving human health depends upon better understanding the lived experience of illness and suffering, as experienced by patients, caregivers, and societies. Because of its focus on and engagement with the complexities, nuances, and tensions of individuals and societies' engagement with health and disease, global literature can provide responses to challenges in human health. Literature helps to expose the suffering caused by stigmas, biases, and discriminatory treatment that patients face from society, health professionals, and family and friends. Providing perspectives from multiple positions across time and space, global literature demonstrates that not all cultures, societies, or individuals respond to diseases in the same way. These examples can trigger a reflection on our personal experiences, reveal our own biases, or provide us with a variety of approaches to dealing with illness and promoting health and well-being. To engage fully with the intricacies of the lived experiences in these works, we've developed our skills in close reading. We studied transmission, translation, and transculturation, as well as put texts in conversation, to draw out, make explicit, and reconstitute the underlying dynamics of the illness experiences illuminated in a diverse array of global works. The dynamics of cultural and individual responses to illness are complicated, and our new tools and our engagement with global literature can help us confront new health situations, both locally and globally.

Goals/objectives. Here in the preamble, you should remind students of how prior work in the course has addressed the course goals.

Scaffolding. Remind students how what they have done throughout the semester has prepared them for this assignment.

Justification. This explains why the particular genre of assignment you've chosen is the best way for you and your students to measure how well they've met the learning objectives associated with this segment of the course.

Your new skills and awareness about world cultures and the fluid nature of identity will especially help you when confronting health problems where there are conflicting expectations and assumptions concerning disease and a need to manage and navigate social and individual needs. If we all must learn how to be more attentive to the needs of individual patients and how to be more open to different kinds of expectations and standards surrounding health. How then, do we teach others what we have learned about and through literature? For this capstone assignment, you will attempt to address these needs by providing resources for another form of literature—the case study.

Goals/objectives. This assignment asks students to **create an original argument**. "Creating" is a higher order activity than "applying," "understanding," or "remembering," and is the most appropriate capstone activity based on the course's goals.

Mission. This explains the assignment in broad brush strokes, giving students a general sense of the project you are setting before them.

Case-based teaching is still relatively new in medical schools. Many cases focus more on the medical details of the situation. Your job is to put together the literature that case writers could use to create a richer and more nuanced case study. This information will go onto a web page that we hope will become a resource as more cases are written for case-based teaching. As the medical school at Harvard uses cases, we will have an event where we will unveil our website and get feedback.



Genre. This is a **creative or non-traditional assignment**. The choice of an assignment's form or medium should reflect the kind of learning experience you want students to have (intellectually and otherwise). Compiling resources for case writers asks students to directly engage with the practical implications of their work with literature. It allows them to apply what they have been learning to the example of how doctors are actually trained to care for patients. Because these are both activities that would not have been as easy to achieve with only an essay or exam, a carefully chosen non-traditional assignment is a good option.

This prompt clearly explains to students the intended **audience** for their assignment. This assignment also includes an **act of public teaching** that allows for feedback from sources other than the instructor.

Tasks. This outlines what students are supposed to do at a more granular level: for example, how to start, where to look, etc. If written well, this part of the assignment prompt ought to function as a kind of rubric for students, helping them to decide for themselves whether they are completing the assignment successfully.

Submission format. This tells students, in appropriate detail, how to submit their work. For example, should the assignment be a five-page paper? And saved in .docx or .pdf format? Should it be uploaded to the course website? Is it due by Tuesday at 5:00pm?

Important: In this regard, this section of the assignment prompt, which combines detailed tasks with information on how to submit each piece of the assignment, acts like a "pre-rubric."

To complete your assignment, you will need to do the following:

1. By the end of the section on October 12th, form a group of two to three. This will be your group for the final project. Your group

Genre. This assignment

does not need to finalize the topic for the project in October, but the earlier you decide on a topic, the more time you will have to collect the data which you will incorporate into your webpage. The assignments throughout the semester are designed to help you develop the essential skills you will need to evaluate resources, so the earlier you pick a topic, the better.



involves **group work**. There are many benefits to group work, e.g., students can tackle more complex problems, they learn to work together, they can produce more sophisticated work, etc. Having students work in groups effectively requires actively monitoring and fostering group dynamics. Establishing groups early and giving them frequent opportunities to work together can ensure the best possible group dynamic.

2. By _(date)_, submit a brief description of the health issue and scenario that will form your research. The problem could be something global in scale, or it could be something local. Fundamentally, it needs to involve multiple cultural perspectives, to require that one be open to different kinds of expectations and standards, to demand attentiveness to the needs of individual patients, and to involve physicians in moderating their patients' expectations vis-a-vis disease. You could look to improve a case that already exists. For examples of cases, see below.



Scaffolding/Formative Feedback. This step **offers context** that helps students choose a topic. It is an opportunity for the group to work together on a low stakes assignment and to receive feedback on their possible argument.

3. By _(date)_, your team should submit an annotated bibliography of research materials that you will use to develop your webpage. This bibliography should contain at least 12 items, drawn from a combination of patient memoirs, medical research or practice articles, policy documents, and media coverage. For each item, you should give a complete citation, as well as a brief paragraph explaining (a) what each source is/argues, and (b) how you anticipate it will be useful in understanding one or more of the perspectives of the actors likely to appear in case studies (e.g. a patient, a physician, a public official, ...).



Creative or non-traditional assignments still require the **use and citation of primary and secondary sources**. In this assignment, students were asked to create an annotated bibliography to use as a resource while creating their final tour. The annotations required that students **identify and summarize** the kinds of important information that would commonly be required on an exam. Even further, they asked students to consider how they would **apply** the text to **making an argument**.

Scaffolding. As in a traditional paper, students will need to make an argument. The annotated bibliography provides clear instructions on the types of roles that sources might play in the final assignment and the opportunity to practice using sources before the final project. The guidelines here function as a **pre-rubric**.

4. You should convene your group to create your webpage, following the guidelines set by the class. You will need to combine your overview of the health issue and scenarios with your links to resources for case writers. You will also have to provide a section explaining why literature is key for creating full and rich case studies, especially in relation to your health issue.
5. As a class, before the website goes live, you will need to decide if certain materials should be linked to other health issues.
6. At the event, each group will need to provide a handout or presentation of their portion of the website.



The guidelines set by the class should also function as part of a **pre-rubric**. Here is a more detailed set of instructions to help students understand the **intended audience** and **format** of the assignment.



This assignment includes **acts of public teaching** that allows for feedback from sources other than the instructor.

In addition to the structural features described in the annotations above, note several other important features of this annotated capstone:

- It addresses students in the second person, i.e. as *you*. Students appreciate instructions which address them directly, which seem to recognize them as equal participants in the course, and which make them a promise.
- It is an assignment that can be used as a resource by future classes.
- It could contribute to future classes writing case studies as a capstone assignment—i.e. It can be used to build to a bigger capstone.
- It involves translating the material of the class into a format for specialists in medicine who happen to be non-specialists in literature.
- It tests the claims of class against something that students can do in the world.