

Paper 2: Case Study

Length: 1200 words

Draft Due: Friday March 24, 11.59pm



For this assignment, you need to choose something or someone **you** consider to be an important example of ‘resistance.’ I encourage you to *be as creative as you want here* in how you understand resistance- as we’ve discussed in class, **resistance can take many different forms**. The idea is to pick a project, movement or person that is **currently alive** (rather than a historical example), but I am open to discussing this. Take it as an opportunity to teach the class about something/someone we might not have otherwise known about!

Once you’ve settled on your example, **choose one of the following forms to write about it**. In each option the primary purpose of the assignment is to communicate to your reader **what, how and why**: **What** the person/movement you have chosen is resisting, **how** they are doing it, and most importantly- **why**- what is driving them? What do they hope to achieve? You will also need to critically evaluate the example you have chosen by asking if there are any issues or challenges with this particular example of resistance, or criticisms of it from other fronts? Addressing these will deepen your paper, and make it more interesting for the reader.

Some examples of student topics from last year:

- Lizzo, resisting fatphobia and misogyny
- South Bronx Mutual Aid- Neighborhood mutual aid group, resisting inequality in the wake of Covid-19
- Writer and ex-detainee Behrouz Boochani, resisting the dehumanization of Australia's immigration detention system
- Rapper Lil Baby, resisting police brutality
- *Haircuts4homeless*, group resisting the social isolation imposed on unhoused Americans
- Trans icon Sylvia Rivera, resisting transphobia and lgbtqi+ hate
- Comedian Amer Rahman, resisting racism through comedy
- Rihanna's beauty line, resisting racism and colorism
- Amira Adawe- activist fighting skin bleaching in Ghana to resist white supremacy and its negative effects
- Performance artist James Luna, resisting Indigenous stereotypes
- Olympic gymnast Simone Biles, resisting the pressure to perform
- NFL player and civil rights activist Colin Kaepernick, resisting police brutality
- The Black Lives Matter movement, resisting police brutality
- The author's undocumented grandmother, resisting xenophobia in the US
- Ridhima Pandey, nine year old suing the Indian government over climate change- resisting corrupt government handling of climate change
- Street artist Banksy, resisting elitism in the art world
- ICEwatch NYC- local group resisting the racist tactics of border control (ICE) in NYC
- Founder of magazine 'Muslim Girl' Amani Al-Katahtbeh- Resisting Islamophobia in the US

Assignment options:

1. Article

This is the classic option, and the one I'm imagining most of you will choose. You can do a lot of interesting and creative things with an article, so it's not a bad option. For this option, you will write an **article** (like many of those we have read together in class) **telling the story of an individual or a movement engaged in some form of resistance**. I encourage you to think outside the box in choosing your example!

The point of the article **isn't to argue a thesis**, but simply to get to the heart of what, how and why- **what** the person/movement you have chosen is resisting, **how** they are doing it (what are their methods), and **why** (what is driving them? What do they want to achieve?). To communicate this effectively, you will have to get your reader interested from the beginning- make them care, *make* them want to read more.

Assuming your reader is not familiar with the topic you are writing about, you will need to give them enough background information to understand the issue you are focusing on. This will involve bringing in other sources of evidence and information. You will probably also want to include quotes and/or examples from the person/movement you have chosen to write about, to convey what they are doing in their own words as well as yours.

2. Interview

This is similar to Option 1- still an article, but this one will center around **an interview you conduct with the person or people at the heart of your case study** (think of 'Mapping the history of Slavery in New York' as one example of this kind of thing).

Because this is still an article, you will need to **start out by introducing your subject** and case study in a way that captures your reader's attention and gives them background information while making them *want* to find out more, **before** you launch into the interview. You may also want to include a **concluding paragraph** at the end of the interview to tie it all together in your own words. What did you learn from the interview? What can your reader take away?

Overall you should focus on communicating the 'what, how, why': **What** the person/movement you have chosen is resisting, **how** they are doing it, and **why**. You are encouraged to edit your

interview so that it is focused and coherent, BUT you will need to record the full-length interview (on a phone is fine) and submit it to me along with your paper.

3. Photo essay

Tell the story of a resistance movement or individual using words + photographs. A photo essay is the same as a regular article (see above), but you would choose a photograph for the title page and then include a photograph for each body paragraph of your article (the photograph should have a clear link to the paragraph). Because the photographs will be doing some of the communicating, this option only needs to be ~1000 words.

4. Podcast

For those of you who would rather do something a bit different you might want to choose this option. It's probably going to involve more work because you will have to interview a person or people, put together a podcast episode and then write it out for submission, but you will be creating something you can share beyond the classroom so it might be worth it.

For this option, you will need to record a ~20-30 minute podcast episode telling the story of the resistance movement/individual you have chosen as your case study. Once again, the focus is on 'what, how, why': **What** the person/movement you have chosen is resisting, **how** they are doing it, and **why**. Podcasts tell a story, and so you should present the story of the case study you have chosen in narrative form. You will **need to interview at least one person**- either the subject of your case study or someone who is deeply knowledgeable about it. Then, you will need to **transcribe (write out) the podcast**, and submit that along with the recording.

If you want to do this option **collaboratively** with someone else in the class just come and pitch it to me.

5. Got another idea?

Pitch it to me before the proposal deadline and we'll try to make it work!

Essential ingredients

Any writer who ticks all of these boxes will get at least a B+ in this assignment

- At least 1100 words [900 if you chose the photo essay option]
- The writer has **chosen an example of 'resistance'** (whether individual or collective), and clearly explains the **what, why and how**.
- The writer **writes from the assumption that the reader does not know anything** about the person/movement and what they are resisting.
- The writer provides **appropriate background information and using evidence and examples** to *show not tell* the reader the *what, why and how*.
- The writer includes an **introduction** to grab the reader's attention and set the scene (usually it's a good idea to open with a *story* or *example*), and a **conclusion** to tie this example of resistance back into the broader issue it relates to.
- The writer approaches their chosen example **critically**. Are there any problems with this example of resistance, ways in which it could be challenged? Do other people have different opinions about it; if so, what are those, and what are some possible responses to them?
- The writer researches the subject they have chosen and uses **sources where necessary (at least three)** to deepen their explanation, and cites these sources in APA or MLA format using a '**Works Cited**' list at the end of the article or transcript.
- The writer uses full, clear sentences, and paragraphs.

What makes an A paper?

- A creative, engaging take on the topic.
- An interesting example of resistance that I can tell the writer cares about and is interested in.
- Beautiful, clear writing.
- Clever use of structure to communicate the *what, how, and why*.

- Good use of evidence, examples and sources to give your reader the background information they need while 'showing' instead of telling them what they need to know.
- Clear and convincing explanation of the *what, how, why*, as well as a clear sense of why this example of resistance is important/necessary/worth paying attention to.