

**PSY 254: Psychological Aspects of Social Issues**  
**Guidelines for Issue Papers**

As described on your syllabus you are responsible for writing two issue papers during the course of the semester. These two papers combine to comprise 5% of your grade for the semester. Thus, they are worth 2.5 points each.

These papers are meant to provide a summary of an issue presented in a news or other popular media source that relates to any of the topics that are covered in our textbook. The source of the original information must be an actual "published" source, e.g. a newspaper or magazine. You may obtain the article you choose to write about from an online version of the source, but the article cannot be from a blog or online/web-only source. After locating your key article, the next step will involve locating an article from a journal in psychology or a related field that provides additional information about the subject of your key article. Provide a brief summary of the journal article that you located.

Whatever media piece you choose to cover, be sure to do the following:

1. Provide a clear summary of the article and why you decided to use it.
2. Clearly describe the specific issue that is presented in our text that the article relates to.
3. Provide a brief summary of the journal article, including how it illuminated or elaborated on the key article that you summarized.
4. Make meaningful connections among the popular press article, the journal article, and material in our textbook that is relevant.
5. Describe whether the information in the article appears to be consistent with the peer reviewed journal source or if there appear to be inconsistencies between the popular media presentation of the phenomena and the scientific literature.
6. Include a copy of both the key article, from the popular media source and the journal article that you used to provide additional information.

This assignment is intended to enhance your ability to connect course concepts to "real world" situations and to provide practice with locating scientific literature that is relevant to a particular issue.

For many issues encountered in the popular media that are relevant to this course, you may need to try a variety of search terms as well as various strategies for expanding or narrowing your searches as appropriate. Be sure that there is a meaningful connection between the popular media piece and the journal article, beyond simply sharing a common word or two in the title or keywords.

Use the formatting instructions on your syllabus for the debate report. These papers should be about 1-2 pages.

The due dates for these papers are listed in the course schedule section of your syllabus. Late papers will NOT BE ACCEPTED for these assignments!