# Current Event Analysis Paper

*2024*

## Description

Current Event Analysis Papers (CEAP) will challenge students to apply their knowledge from the course curriculum to a current event.

Students will choose a piece of **news media** covering a recent current event and write a paper critically analyzing the reporting on that event using information, concepts, and theories from course curriculum.

Papers will include a summary of the current event, integrative analysis with course curriculum, identification of author theoretical perspectives, demonstrate lateral reading, and critical self-reflection. All papers will use APA style to cite course curriculum and news media.

## Purpose

Students should demonstrate the following proficiencies in their CEAP:

### Substantive Knowledge

1. Demonstrate **accurate** understanding of major course concepts
2. Identifying **examples** of course concepts in the real world
3. Expanding their understanding of course concepts through **comparison to real-world events**
4. Applying course curriculum to better understand, explain, and **critique current events**

### Critical Thinking Skills

1. Comparing news media to **reputable information sources**
2. Examining one's own **information-seeking habits**
3. Critiquing **authorship and source work**
4. Examining **media bias** using course theories
5. Critiquing reporting quality though **lateral reading**
6. Closing **information gaps** through lateral reading
7. Examining **one's own bias** through self-reflection

### Communication Skills

1. Improving grammar, spelling, and basic writing skills
2. Writing in clearly, concisely, and logically
3. Organizing writing at both sentence- and paragraph-levels
4. Grounding ideas in reputable sources using in-text citations
5. Learning how to use APA style

## STEP 1: CEAP PROPOSAL

Students will submit a proposal of their paper through answering a series of question on a D2L quiz.

The instructor will provide feedback to help the student avoid problems when writing the paper. The instructor may recommend the student choose different media or concepts for their paper. Students are expected to review and incorporate instructor feedback into their CEAP. Some students who need major revisions may be required to resubmit their proposal. Student should prepare to provide the following information on their paper proposals in the D2L.

***Students will NOT turn in this form. However, it has been formatted with interactive check boxes and text boxes so students may use this document to prepare their proposal. Then students can copy and paste responses in this document into the D2L quiz.***

### ☐ Media Selection & URL

Students will submit a working hyperlink to the news media they have chosen.

News media may be in written (article), video (broadcast), or audio (radio) form.

To aid students' finding articles, students are encouraged to search the news outlets that are linked in D2L under the "CEAP Proposal" section. However, students may use other news outlets as well.

Students should review the D2L rubric make sure their media meet the following criteria:

- ☐ Features **news reporting** on a **current event**—NOT an op-ed/opinion piece, TEDtalk, podcast, or entertainment show, etc.
- ☐ Reporting on a current event that occurred less than 1 year ago.
- ☐ Takes less than 10 minutes to read/watch/listen to media.

Students are strongly encouraged to review the suggestions of recent current events/topics, which are listed under the **Current Event Analysis Paper** section of D2L. Students may request permission from their instructor to write about topics not on that list that they see as relevant to the course.

## Course Concept(s)

Students will identify at least one course concept (1-4 words) that clearly pertains to **both** the news media and to course material. Concept(s) should be

> **Specific**. No concept should be the title of an entire module or chapter (i.e., too broad)**.**
>
> **Not a theoretical perspective.** There will be a separate question wherein you will identify the theoretical perspective of the author.

What is/are specific course concept(s) that are related to your article? Provide a citation, URL, or description for where you found that concept in the curriculum. If from Tatum, provide a page number.

| Course Concept | Curriculum Source |
|---|---|
| | |
| | |
| | |

## Course Integrated Analysis Plan

Students will write a detailed summary of how they plan to analyze the media and course concept. Analysis should **integrate** the news media and course concept(s).

Students are encouraged to take one or both of the analytical approaches below. In your response, try answering one or more of the following questions:

a. **Applying real-world events to better understand curriculum.** How do real-world issues/events this new media exemplify course concepts? How does this new media reporting expand your understanding of those course concepts through comparing them with real-world events?

b. **Applying curriculum to better understand real-world events.** How does what we learned in this course give you more context to better understand this current event/issue? How does what we learn in this course offer further explanation of what's going on here? Using knowledge you have gained from this taking this course, do you have any criticisms for how this current event/issue is being reported on?

## Media Critique

Students will identify what theoretical perspective related to poverty or race from course curriculum they believe the author is writing from. What is their bias and how do you know?

Which of the perspectives that we learned about in this course do you think the **author/reporters/ producers** of your news media are working from?

**Read/listen/watch **closely and critically** (maybe even laterally).*

**If your media is mostly focused on race, chose a perspective on race. If your media is mostly about economics, use a poverty theory. You can refresh your memory by reviewing Dr. O's Theories Interactive Diagram.*

| Poverty Options | Race Options |
|---|---|
| Classical/Neoclassical | Racism is merely a **personal ideology**, NOT a system of advantage based on race (Ch. 1); **color-blind ideology** (Ch. 7) |
| Keynesian/Neoliberal | Racism is a **system of advantage based on race**, NOT merely personal ideology (Ch. 1); **color consciousness** (Ch. 7) |
| Marxist/Communist | |

What clues in the news media (e.g., quotes) or elsewhere online (e.g., lateral reading about the author) lead you to this conclusion about the author/reporter/producer's perspective? **Include quotes in your response**. You may also include links or photos in your quiz response.

## Ad Fontes Media Bias Chart

Use the Ad Fontes Media Bias Interaction Chart to find the outlet where your media was published.

Use the key on the right side of the chart and consider where the logo is placed on the chart (which is an average of all the dots/stories reviewed for that outlet). In which category does your outlet fall on the chart?

| Left/Liberal | | Right/Conservative |
|---|---|---|
| | Most reliable for news | |
| | Reliable for news but high in opinion/analysis content | |
| | Some reliability issues and/or extremism | |
| | Serious reliability issues and/or extremism | |

## Strategic Information-Seeking Behaviors

Part of information literacy is being persistent and strategic when seeking information. Students will describe their search process and how they chose their news media.

Where did you look for articles?

What key terms did you search?

Did you do multiple searches? If so, how many?

What problems did you run into while searching? How did you solve those problems?

How long did you spend looking for your news media piece?

How many pieces of media did you review before selecting one?

Aside from the assignment requirements, what else were you looking for in your media selection?

Were there search results that you rejected? Why?

Ultimately, why did you choose this piece of media?

## Lateral Reading

One portion of your paper will ask you to engage in lateral reading for one **significant (not trivial)** concept, entity, event, person, policy, or issue mentioned in the media about which you need to learn more, fact-check, or find alternative opinions.

What concept, entity, event, person, policy, or issue do you think it would be **most valuable** to apply lateral reading to enhance your understanding of this issue/event? Perhaps you need to more background information, perhaps you want to fact-check a significant claim, or perhaps you disagree with how an issue/event is portrayed.

Do some lateral reading to find a **reputable source** that either provides more background information or that writes about this topic from a contrasting perspective. Provide a working URL to your additional source(s).

How did you find this source(s)? Why did you choose it/them (consider quality of information)?

## Step 2: Analysis Paper

### Content

Using course curriculum, students are to write an in-depth analysis of the current event. Students are encourage to use the rubric on D2L to grade their paper before submitting it.

***Note that the word counts below are MAXIMUMS. Do not exceed them.***

Student can use checkboxes below to make sure that their paper includes each of the following:

☐ **Media hyperlink.** A working URL to the news media should be at the **top of the paper**.

☐ **Event summary.** *<100 words.* A brief, clear, and accurate summary of the news story.

☐ **Course integration.** *300-350 words.* An integrative analysis of media and course curriculum.

- ☐ Bold and underline at least **one specific course concept** that frames the analysis.
- ☐ Integrate **both** the media and course curriculum in the analysis. Points will be deducted if the analysis focuses too much on just the media or just course content without integrating them. Example papers in D2L. Analysis is likely to take at least one of two forms:
  - ***How does the news help us understand/illustrate course material better?*** Analyzing how the media is an example of a course concept in a way that further illustrates and explains course material.
  - ***How does the course curriculum help us understand this news better?*** Analyzing how the course material contextualizes, explains, or challenges a concept present in the media.

☐ **Media critique.** *300-350 words.* Respond to the following questions:

- ☐ Using the options provided on the proposal, which perspective on poverty or race learned about in class is this author/producer of this media working from? In other words, what is their bias?
- ☐ What clues/quotes in the article or information discovered via lateral reading lead to your conclusion? When laterally reading consider investigating some of the following:
  - Author: Who is the main author, interviewer, reporter, or field correspondent?
    - What is their education? What are their credentials?
    - What are some other articles/content have they produced?
    - Follow-up on some of the sources linked in the article. Are they reputable and relevant sources? What voices are they listening to?
  - Outlet: What is the news studio/outlet who produced this news?
    - Who is their typical audience?
    - How do you know whether this is a reputable news source or not?

- [ ] How is this media outlet categorized on the Ad Fontes Media Bias Interaction Chart?

- [ ] Considering your answers to the previous questions, evaluate to what extent do you think this author/producer has offered a fair and trustworthy report of the topic.

- [ ] **Lateral reading.** *250-300 words.* Do some lateral reading to find a **reputable source** that either provides more background information or that writes about this topic from a contrasting perspective. Perhaps you need to more background information, perhaps you want to fact-check a significant claim, or perhaps you disagree with how an issue/event is portrayed.

  - [ ] What concept, entity, event, person, policy, or issue do you think it would be **most valuable** to apply lateral reading to enhance your understanding of this issue/event? Why?

  - [ ] Do some lateral reading to find a reputable source that either provides more background information or that writes about this topic from a contrasting perspective. **Provide a working URL to your additional source(s).**

  - [ ] Briefly explain how you found your additional source(s). Why did you choose it/them?

  - [ ] Most importantly, how does this new information change your understanding of the current events/issues reported your original news media?

- [ ] **Critical self-reflection.** *<200 words.*

  - [ ] How did this critiquing this news media and engaging laterally challenge and/or reinforce your views on this current event/issue?

  - [ ] What ideas or skills that have you learned about media literacy (either through this assignment or in the course) do you think will have the biggest impact on you going forward?

*The following pages have additional checklists and hyperlinks to help you to review your paper for formatting, structure, and style guidelines.*

***THE GUIDELINES BELOW ARE NOT MEANINGLESS BUSY WORK. THEY HAVE BEEN CAREFULLY CRAFTED OVER MANY YEARS OF GRADING PAPERS. MAKE SURE YOU FOLLOW THEM.***

Use the checklists below to review your paper for formatting, structure, and style before submitting it.

## Structure

- [ ] Use APA style headings for each required component of the paper (i.e., "Event Summary", "Course Integration", etc.).
- [ ] Do **NOT** include opening or closing paragraphs—such paragraphs will **NOT** count toward the word-count minimum requirement.
- [ ] Make any course concept easily distinguishable by **bolding and underlining** it.

## APA Style

Students will use the 7th edition of APA style to provide in-text citations and references. In addition to the direct links provided below, D2L includes section for APA style that includes links to excellent (and enjoyable) YouTube tutorials. The best way to learn APA is to TRY IT.

### Front Matter

- [ ] Title pages should follow the student APA title page format. Do not write an abstract.

### Main Body

- [ ] In the body of the text, students should follow the APA basic guidelines and authorship guidelines for in-text citations.
- [ ] Additionally, students should provide **page numbers in ALL citations**, not just direct quotations.
- [ ] The use of **direct quotations** should be limited to **less than about 15%** of the paper (an eyeball estimate is fine). Most content should be paraphrased or the student's own ideas.
- [ ] Papers should have **ample citations**—err on the side of too many rather than too little. Each sentence stating ideas or information should clearly correspond to a credible source (usually curriculum or the news media). There are three reasons for providing ample in-text citations:

    1. Avoiding plagiarism by giving appropriate credit to the author of that idea/information;
    2. Students often make up facts, misquote, or inaccurately represent ideas without realizing it, and citations help keep writing grounded in verifiable fact; and
    3. Allows the instructor to trace claims back to a source to check for accuracy.

For more on the importance of citations, watch the short video on D2L.

## References Page

***DO NOT USE CITATION/REFERENCE GENERATORS!*** They are nearly always incorrect (in specific ways the instructor can identify), and do not help the student learn APA style.

- [ ] The top of the reference page should have the heading "References".
- [ ] All reference pages should have AT LEAST the following FIVE entries:
  - [ ] The original news media (APA Style for Online News Articles and Podcasts Reference Entries)
  - [ ] A piece of course curriculum corresponding to the concept under analysis (YouTube Videos)
  - [ ] A reference entry for the source of the theoretical perspective of the author/producer
  - [ ] The lateral reading source material
  - [ ] The Ad Fontes (2021) Media Bias Chart (formatting provided below)

    Ad Fontes Media. (2021). [Interactive Media Bias Chart]. https://adfontesmedia.com/interactive-media-bias-chart/
- [ ] Include a reference entry for any additional course curriculum that was cited (e.g., D2L pages, videos, reports, articles, etc.)
- [ ] Include a reference entry for any additional lateral reading sources that were cited.

If a paper cites Tatum (2017), the reference entry should be formatted as such (including *italics*):

Tatum, B. D. (2017). *Why are all the black kids sitting together in the cafeteria? And other conversations about race* (2nd ed.). Basic Books.

Each reference should follow the APA style guidelines. A few helpful links are provided above, but more are included in D2L under APA

## APA Resources

Students are encouraged to use the following resources:

- Example papers on D2L
- APA videos and links provided in the CEAP section of D2L
- Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) *Strongly recommended*
- MTSU Writing Center
- Consult the peers/instructor via Questions & Feedback discussion board
- Email the instructor

## Submission Guidelines

Papers should be:

- ☐ anonymized (use M# instead of name),
- ☐ less than the word count maximums for each section,
- ☐ double-spaced,
- ☐ 12-point font,
- ☐ in compliance with APA formatting guidelines, and
- ☐ submitted as a Word document (**not a PDF, Pages, nor Google doc**)
- ☐ run through 1-2 free AI-detection online platforms to make sure it's NOT flagged as "AI-generated"
- ☐ Change file name to "M# CEAP"
- ☐ The **very last thing** students should do before submitting any paper drafts is run it through Grammarly to check for writing, spelling, and proofreading errors.

All possible attempts will be made to grade these papers "blind"—without knowing which student's paper is being graded. Thus, students **should not** put their names on their papers or in the file name. Instead, students should use their M# in the paper and the file name.

## AI-Generated Writing

All papers will be subject to Artificial Intelligence (AI) detection software, which estimates the probability that a paper (as a whole or just parts of it) were written using AI software. Although AI is a useful tool for education, this assignment should reflect **your own analysis and writing only**.

If a student's assignment is flagged as likely to have been written by AI, the instructor will ask the student to resubmit the assignment with the flagged sections written in their own words.

Students tempted to use AI to write their assignment should keep in mind that, if they are asked to resubmit, they may be asked to do so with **a very short turn-around window (as short as few hours**; when grading occurs close to MTSU's deadline for submitting final grades) or **during a time that is not convenient for the student (e.g., over the weekend).**

If a student does not submit a revised paper by the new deadline, they will not receive credit for sections of paper that are flagged as likely generated using AI. This policy will be faithfully implemented, **even in cases in which the student did not see the instructor's notification before the new deadline passed** or **when the student is unable to make the requested changes during the extension window.**

Given the potentially precarious situations an AI-flagged assignment could put a student in, all students are encouraged to use one or two free AI-detection softwares to ensure their paper will not be flagged as likely written by AI before they submit.

# Rubrics

Students are **strongly encouraged** to review the more detailed rubrics which are available in D2L.

| Criteria | Description | % Grade |
|---|---|---|
| **Submission Guidelines** | M# (not student name) on paper and in the file name<br><br>File name "M# CEAP"<br><br>Submitted as Word document (not PDF)<br><br>Adheres to word count range (1,150 to 1,300 words)<br><br>No opening/closing paragraphs | 4% |
| **Grammar** | Few to no grammatical or spelling errors | 4% |
| **Clear/Concise Writing Style** | Clear and concise writing with few redundancies<br><br>No unnecessarily flowery language<br><br>Ideas are organized and flow logically | 4% |
| **APA Format** | APA-style layout, fonts, references, and in-text citations<br><br>Student paper APA-style title page present (no abstract)<br><br>Level 1 Headings before each segment of paper<br><br>Page # provided for books/reports; paragraphs # provided for articles; timestamps (mm:ss) provided for videos<br><br>Accurate paraphrasing; direct quotes make up <15% of the paper.<br><br>References page includes all 5 required reference entries, at minimum. | 6% |
| **Citation Quantity** | Ideas and information are supported with an adequate number of in-text citations. The citation source for each a statement is usually clear. | 10% |

| Criteria | Description | % Grade |
|---|---|---|
| **Media URL** | A working hyperlink to media is provided at the top of the paper | 2% |
| **Event Summary** | <100 words<br><br>A clear and accurate summary of the current event | 6% |
| **Course Integration** | 300-350 words<br><br>At least one **specific, bolded, and underlined** course concept that frames the analysis is clearly **relevant** to the current event<br><br>Analysis accurately and thoughtfully **integrates** news media and course curriculum | 18% |
| **Media Critique** | 300-350 words<br><br>Accurately identifies the perspective on poverty or race from course curriculum that is applied in the article using clues from the article or elsewhere online<br><br>Provides convincing quotes and/or evidence for their conclusion as to the author's perspective/bias.<br><br>Accurately identifies the categorization of the media outlet using the Ad Fontes Media Bias Chart.<br><br>Uses above information to critically evaluate the fairness and trustworthiness of reporting on current event/issue. | 18% |
| **Lateral reading** | 250-300 words<br><br>Clearly articulates a knowledge gap on the topic in the media and why filling that gap is valuable to enhance understanding of event/issue.<br><br>Provides working URL to reputable source (also featured in reference list).<br><br>Thoughtfully analyzes of why they choose their supplemental source material and how they found it.<br><br>Most important: In-depth reflection how the information they found changed their understanding of the topic/original media reporting | 18% |

| Criteria | Description | % Grade |
|---|---|---|
| **Critical self-reflection** | <200 words<br><br>In-depth and critical analysis of how student's views on the topic in the media have been challenged or reinforced<br><br>Explains media literacy ideas or skills they learned about in this assignment or in the course that they think will have the biggest impact on them going forward | 10% |

## Deadlines

Each CEAP component should be submitted by 11:59 pm on its due date using the prescribed submission method on D2L.

| CEAP Component | Due Date | Submission Method |
|---|---|---|
| Paper Proposal | Friday, November 15, 2022 | Quiz |
| Paper Submission | Friday, December 6, 2022 | Dropbox |