**COMM 1007 - College English: Writing Assignment One (20%)**

**Due**: Hard copy to be submitted at the beginning of class – **Monday, October 7th**

**Late Penalty: 10% per day**

**Guidelines:**

Choose one of the below resources and write a persuasive essay between 700-800 words in length. Essays should demonstrate an understanding of persuasive writing techniques, essay structure, and clear, concise, and organized writing. Essays should also present a well-developed thesis statement that is supported throughout.

This is not a research essay; the only resource needed is the film, podcast, or article chosen from below. Students are to develop an argument that is different from the author’s in the article: Simply re-arguing the author’s argument is not a persuasive essay.

Essays should make effective use of an introduction, topic sentences, direct quotations/paraphrases, and conclusion. Body paragraphs should be organized strategically and logically. Also, essays should demonstrate accurate APA in-text citation and should include a title page and a reference page.

**Choose ONE of the following:**

1. **Watch: *The House I Live In* (2012); rent the film at a video store or via the Video on Demand link posted to Blackboard.**

The 2012 documentary *The House I Live In* critically examines the U.S. War on Drugs and its “disproportionate impacts on poor and low-income communities and communities of color, a growing epidemic of drug overdose fatalities, and increased rates of addiction and misuse”; the film also identifies and explores the widespread effects of the War on Drugs on the U.S. prison system. Watch the film. Write an essay that identifies and considers one issue put forward by the film; in your view, did the film present a compassionate and critical view of this issue? Is their perspective and evidence successful and convincing? Why or why not?

1. **Listen: “Harper High School” (parts one and two) *This American Life* podcast (2013); posted to Blackboard (if you would like to download them on your own, you may purchase them or the *TAL* app from the iTunes store).**

In the two radio shows dedicated to Harper High School in Chicago, Illinois, *This American Life* reporters “spent five months at Harper High School in Chicago, where last year alone 29 current and recent students were shot. 29.” The reporters wanted to “get a sense of what it means to live in the midst of all this gun violence, how teens and adults navigate a world of funerals and Homecoming dances.” Listen to both podcasts. Write an essay that identifies and considers the position put forth by *This American Life* reporters; in your view, did they present both a compassionate and a critical perspective on what’s going on at Harper High School? Is their reporting successful and convincing? Why or why not?

1. **Read: “What’s so bad about a boy who wants to wear a dress?”  
   by Ruth Padawer in *New York Times Magazine* and “Toronto parents hide child’s gender in bid for neutral treatment” by Tom Blackwell in *The National Post*; the articles have been posted to Blackboard.**

Padawer (2012) writes about a family whose son defies gender norms, while Blackwell (2011) writes about a family who refuses to disclose the sex of their baby in order to avoid gender-specific treatment of the child. Write an essay that identifies and considers the position put forth by Padawer and Blackwell; in your view, does each reporter represent a compassionate and critical perspective on each family’s decision? Is their reporting successful and convincing? Why or why not?

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| Component | Mark |
| Essay Content:  Does the essay have an effective, clear introduction that presents the topic and thesis statement? Is the thesis statement specific, clear, and arguable?  Does the essay have effective, logical, and engaging body paragraphs that support the thesis?  Do the body paragraphs present the information from the article and support the student’s central argument?  Does the conclusion wrap up the argument clearly? | / 10 |
| Essay Organization:  Are the body paragraphs unified and presented in a logical manner?  Does the essay have a sense of cohesion and flow? | / 5 |
| Grammar/Style/APA:  Correct APA formatting, citation, and documentation used in the essay?  Correct grammar and punctuation used in the essay?  Appropriate tone and word choice for academic writing? | / 5 |

Total: / 20