

# ASSIGNMENT Research Paper: Protest Art & Social Change

For your final paper, we will be returning to the idea of memorials, if we think about the ways that archives can serve as memorials of people, groups, and events. Like any other memorial, archives are complicated sites of memory and power, where the agency to preserve and tell one's own story is a privilege afforded to the few, but also where our broader cultural memories and values are captured and honored in a meaningful way. More specifically, you will be looking at archival collections on artist activist books, or protest art. These works of art will serve as one of a variety of source types you'll use to make a larger argument about the issue they address.

The goal of this paper is to connect the tasks you've done in essays 1-4 (stating an opinion, analyzing texts, responding to opinions, synthesizing outside research) into a final culminating essay. In this paper, you will be taking a stand on a controversial issue, and use a variety of sources (peer reviewed and popular, primary and secondary, data and art) to support your opinion on that issue.

1. You will begin your essay by telling a story about an issue that brings it locally to St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota, or another "home space" of your choice. What is exciting, resonant, or important about this story to that community? Identify a specific local audience for your paper, convince them of the stakes, and establish your opinion.
2. Then, in the body of your paper, you will broaden the topic, shifting from its local ramifications to national or even international scale. In order to contextualize the issue and support your opinion, you should rely on a variety of rhetorical tools and a variety of types of evidence, including:
  - a. At least one works of protest art from special collections (note: you will want to research the artist to understand their role and interest in this movement along with the time, place, and audience that contextualizes their work).
  - b. At least one local, digitized sources (St. Olaf College Archives Online, *St. Olaf Messenger* online, campus yearbooks, local newspaper, etc.; see the course libguide)
  - c. At least one popular source (magazine, newspaper, etc.)
  - d. At least one scholarly reference book
  - e. At least one peer-reviewed scholarly sources
  - f. Evidence from your own experience

Your argument should synthesize these sources into a scholarly conversation, but put your voice (including your argument and your experience) at the forefront. You may use the synthesis matrix handout to help you.

3. Finally, you will end with a call to action, proposing a **specific local action** that your audience can take to make a change. The change could be an individual mandate or a community effort, but it should be a specific, local goal that you can demonstrate will be both meaningful and achievable.

As you prepare for this project, we will have library sessions on academic research and archival research. While library research is maybe more strategic and intentional, archival research is maybe more exploratory and serendipitous. You'll need to model skills in both these areas to succeed in this essay. Please take advantage of library staff, including Jillian Sparks and Maggie Epstein, in addition to your writing and research tutor and me, as you gather and interpret sources.

**Guidelines:** You will be expected to follow a writing process, and I will consider your process in my evaluation. A well-developed essay will be approximately 4-5 pages (1000-1250 words). Your essay should be typed, double spaced, with your name and date at the top. Be sure to include an effective title that highlights the main idea of your argument. Use MLA guidelines for citation. Be sure to double check any auto-generated citations, and use *Easy Writer* for instructions on unusual source types like a work of art (p. 154) or unpublished work (p. 156).