

Essay 2: They Say/I Say

ENGL 1101, Fall 2017

Technical Requirements

All drafts must:

- be 500–750 words (2–3 pages)
- be double-spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman font
- include your name, the course name, the date, and a title
- include at least 2 brief quotations and/or paraphrases with MLA in-text citations
- include a Works Cited entry in MLA style
- be revised, edited, and proofread

First draft:

- Bring two stapled, printed copies to use in lab/class on **Tuesday, October 24**

Second draft:

- Bring old drafts with revision notes
- Bring two stapled, printed copies to use in lab/class on **Tuesday, October 31**

Final draft:

- Hand in old drafts with revision notes in class on **Thursday, November 2**
- Submit final draft through **turnitin.com** by 11:59pm on **Sunday, November 5**

Essay 2 requires you to write in response to an assigned text based on your own contexts and experiences. You will write for an academic audience—probably your professors and other college-educated people—who have certain expectations about what makes a reasonable response to a written text. There are many possible ways to write about texts, but academic writing values responses that are respectful of a text’s author and stay true to the points the author is making.

As a result, this assignment asks you to write a balanced essay that fairly summarizes and discusses the published essay, while offering your own response to the essay’s ideas. Rather than writing *all* summary (“they say”) or *all* reaction (“I say”), you should aim for a conversation between you and the author—one that takes your own ideas and the writer’s equally seriously.

Your essay may not (and probably should not) address every single point the text’s author makes. Let your own interests, ideas, experiences, and reactions be the guides for what positions or ideas in the essay you choose to respond to.

Choose only one of this unit’s assigned readings to write about:

“Lean In: What Would You Do If You Weren’t Afraid” by Sheryl Sandberg

or

“Dig Deep: Beyond *Lean In*” by bell hooks

Later, I will provide some starting-point questions for each essay. These may help in discussion and in developing your thesis, but I expect you to write a cohesive essay, *not simply answers to assigned questions*.

For "Evaluating Information: The Cornerstone of Civic Online Reasoning: Executive Summary"

- What steps should you take to figure out the trustworthiness of information you find online?
- If you're not entirely sure a source is trustworthy, should you share it with friends? Why or why not?
- The authors write that they "worry that democracy is threatened by the ease at which disinformation about civic issues is allowed to spread and flourish" (5). What are some examples of "disinformation about civic issues"? Do you agree that bad information is bad for democracy? Why or why not?
- Which of the "Next Steps" that the authors mention on page 7 sounds the best to you? What additional "Next Steps" can you recommend that may help increase digital literacy? Do you think this issue is important enough to (perhaps) take time away from other kinds of study?

For "The Delusion of Alternative Facts"

- If we can't entirely trust our senses, how can we tell what's true?
- How can using the scientific method help us distinguish better and worse facts? Is the scientific method really better than going with your "gut feeling"? Why or why not?
- Why does it matter whether the White House overstates the crowd size for the inauguration? Do you think that "alternative facts" are problematic? Why or why not?
- Is the scientific method always the best way of approaching truth? Why or why not?