

Letters

For this assignment, you will choose three academic disciplines (or, alternatively, three ideas, theories, or concepts covered in the course) that you find particularly interesting. You will select these early in the semester.

This assignment involves writing three letters, one about each of your three choices. Each letter should be approximately 450–550 words. The goal of these letters is to persuade the reader of the *value* of studying each.

While not required, it may be helpful to imagine writing the letter to someone in particular (a friend or family member), as this can help you focus on your argument and make it more persuasive.

Your goal is to focus on the *inherent benefits* of the discipline (or idea, theory, concept) itself, rather than the career or financial benefits.

Inherent benefits refer to the values that arise directly from learning the material. This can be contrasted with what studying it can do *for* you, down the line. So, for example, helping you to see the world in particular ways, or helping you grow intellectually or personally – promoting critical thinking, empathy, or creativity – are all inherent benefits. Inherent benefits also include wider benefits to society, such as improving society, helping us to live better lives in general, or letting us understand things that we previously did not understand.

By contrast, being able to get a specific job, a high salary, or a leg up on the job market is *not* an inherent benefit. It is essential that you *do not* include these things in any way in the assignment. If you do so, you will receive an immediate “F” grade for the assignment.