Proposal Project Guide:

The Assignment:
For this essay, you will be proposing a solution to problem/issue/conflict in your community. Remember community can be defined in many ways – social, educational, cultural. You will need to investigate the problem and determine the best solution. You will also need to show why your solution is better than other possibilities and that the benefits outweigh the costs of implementing your idea.

Length: 4-6 pages (PROPOSAL PROJECT FORMAT)
- History/Background: Discuss Well-Defined Problem you are addressing
- Mission Statement: Well-Argued Solution Proposal
- Implemented Plan or Strategy: Provide evidence of how/why your solution is effective
- Projected Results: Projected impact and benefits of solution (address counter-arguments)

3-4 sources, at least 2 academic peer-reviewed (must be from library)

Your Essay Will Need To:
(See Basic Features Chapter 7 in St. Martin’s Guide to Writing)
1. Explain the problem to the reader. Prove that this is a problem. Don’t assume that it’s apparent.
2. Introduce your solution. Explain what will be involved in implementing your plan (how it will be done/what it will look like). Explain why your solution is the best way to solve the problem.
3. Respond to counterarguments. If this problem has been tackled before you might address the solution that didn’t work and then go into why yours is better.
4. Be well-organized and clearly understandable.

The Audience:
Your audience for this essay could be several different people or groups of people. You might want to address everyone in the group who is experiencing the problem—maybe the solution lies within them. Maybe you will want to address the person or group who can take action to resolve your problem—like a city council or the president of the university. Whichever audience you think would be most appropriate, you must adjust your tone so as not to offend or alienate them. You also want them to take you seriously and respect your ideas.

The Problem:
Your problem should be relatively small in scope. You can’t tackle the entire higher education system coherently in 4-6 pages. You should also be in a position of knowledge and relative authority on this issue. This will allow you to state your position so your audience will really consider your solution. You must be able to demonstrate to your reader that the problem exists and is serious and that you have more than a casual understanding of its causes and consequences. If you find that you cannot do this, you will want to select another problem to write about.

The Solution:
Solving problems takes time. Apparent solutions often turn out to be impossible. After all, a solution has to be both workable and acceptable to the community or group involved.
Consequently, you should strive to come up with several possible solutions whose advantages and disadvantages can be weighed. Keep in mind that the most imaginative solutions sometimes occur only after you’ve struggled with a number of other possibilities.

**The Benefit Analysis:**
An essential part of the reasoning for this essay involves your analysis of the costs of the solution versus the benefits of the solution. This isn’t necessarily a monetary cost. For example, maybe the cost of your solution will be the loss of convenience for one group of people while the benefit is the added convenience for another group. Part of your argument will have to be how the benefits of the solution outweigh the costs.

**Alternative Solutions/Counterarguments:**
Just as you had to deal with counterarguments in your previous essays, in this essay, you will have to present and address those who would disagree with you. These nay-sayers might present you with counterarguments and alternative solutions which you, in turn, will have to refute or accommodate. This can be woven into the proposal.

**Getting Started:**
Pick a topic that you have a personal investment in solving. Students who pick topics that have a direct impact on their lives tend to be more innovated and motivated to find solutions. Reflect and think about Lauren’s investment in *Parable of the Sower*, to cultivate solutions for her community and learn survival strategies. She is highly motivated and invested because proposing solutions improves the quality of life for her community and self.

Approach this as a project proposal, thus, your audience is going to play a role in how you “pitch” your solution.

**INVENTION WORK:**

- Identify problem or issue in your community & the impact it has:
  
- Analyze the problem to identify causes and/or its effects
  
- Why are you invested in solving it? Why should others be invested or care? By solving this issue who benefits?
GUIDED RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

Focus, Well-Defined Problem:

- What evidence might help support or define my problem to my audience?

- Is there a specific example and/or are there specific statistics that may help identify the impact of this problem?

- Is there research that speaks to the specific area/community that has been conducted on this issue/topic? If so, what sources; if not, are there other communities who have conducted similar research or investigations that may help.

- What information might highlight severity of the problem?

Developing a Solution:

- Are there other tried or proposed solutions regarding this issue/topic within or/and outside your specific community?
  - How have they succeeded or failed?
  - Investigate.

- Are there some solutions tried or proposed that focus on eliminating a cause or minimize an effect of the problem?

- In investigating, tried or proposed solutions, reflect on if those solution/s get at root of problem or reactionary.

- Investigate problem from various points of view.

- Think of creative solutions that have yet to be explored. In this proposal your aim might be layered in organizing, bring awareness and/or working across communities.

- Discuss this issue or topic with people in your community for inspiration and ideas.
Supporting Your Solution:

- Your solution must be supported by evidence of how and why your proposal will be effective.

- You must support a plan of implementation within your community and how/why it will work/operate.

- In a proposal ethos, (credible sources) will strengthen your argument. Review and reflect on how authors in chapter 7, use sources/research to support their creative solution proposals.

Possible Research Questions:

Use time and space to discuss with classmates possible research sources/questions/data that will help shape or inspire creative solutions: