

This I Believe Essay, with revision (50 points total)

Due dates:

Tuesday April 19: Draft version, on D2L and one paper copy by beginning of class (10 points)

Tuesday April 19: Peer review of others on provided forms (5 points)

Tuesday April 26: Revision Plan with exercises, on paper by beginning of class (15 points)

Thursday April 28: Final version, on D2L by beginning of class (20 points)

Overview: The ultimate goal of this assignment is to write a clear, organized, and well-crafted personal essay about a belief that you hold strongly and which is related to the issue of sustainability. (Here, as in class, sustainability is defined broadly, including environmental, societal/cultural, and economic sustainability considered at many possible levels, e.g. from personal actions and responsibility to global policies). To accomplish this goal, this project will include time to reflect and consider what others have written, feedback from others, and the opportunity for thoughtful revision and editing. This essay is short so please ensure that the words you use are effective. Try to make this among the most refined and well-crafted prose you write for this course.

Learning objectives: This assignment is designed to address the areas of critical thinking, communication, ethics and social responsibility, and the diversity of human experience.

Note: This project will be broken down into several steps, which are outlined below. Pay attention to due dates and the fact that both your draft and final essay will be submitted online at the D2L course website.

1. Tuesday April 12 mentor session

In this mentor session you will look at and reflect on other *This I Believe* essays (<http://thisibelieve.org>) connected to the issue of sustainability. Instructions will be provided in mentor session. You will also review the provided writing guidelines (which you should refer back to often: <http://thisibelieve.org/guidelines/>).

2. Write your own essay for *This I Believe* following the guidelines (e.g. for word count, style, etc.) Your topic should be something you believe strongly and is connected to the topic of sustainability (broadly defined). Your topic (belief) should be reflected in a clear thesis statement in your essay as well as in the title of your essay. Be sure to focus your essay around your thesis so that you illustrate, support, and/or explain your belief.
3. **Draft Essay DUE: Tuesday April 19 online on D2L an (10 pts; 5 pts for reviews)** In mentor session you will review other students' essays and have your essay reviewed by others. Further instructions will be provided in mentor session.
4. **Revision Plan DUE: Tuesday April 26 on paper by beginning of class (15 pts)** See Revision Plan instructions on next page.
5. **Final Essay DUE: Thursday April 28 online on D2L (20 pts)** Based on your revision plan, turn it final version online on D2L before the start of class. Also, please submit your

essay to the *This I Believe* website. To submit start here:
<http://thisibelieve.org/submission> .

Grading Criteria: Your draft will be assessed on the degree to which it is a complete draft (introduction, support of your thesis, and conclusion). Style and grammar will not be assessed on the draft. Your final version will be assessed on the degree to which it follows the *This I Believe* guidelines (<http://thisibelieve.org/guidelines/>) AND on the degree to which you take the opportunity to revise your draft (based on your revision plan, your own critical assessment, and the feedback from others).

Revision Plan Instructions

Before you revise, read through your peer review notes, instructor's (and mentor's) comments, making a list of feedback. Use your list plus your own ideas for improvement to write a revision plan or strategy. In the plan you will decide which issues you'll address and how you'll address them in your final version. Also, consult past assignments or your writing log to help you avoid repeating common errors in your writing.

Your revision plan should include 3 sections:

1. A bulleted list of specific changes you will make. The level of detail will depend on the nature of the change. Make it clear what you are going to do, but especially for more involved revisions you don't have to say exactly how.

Examples:

- Moving thesis statement in last paragraph to my first paragraph
 - Narrowing my belief (thesis) statement to ...<actual new thesis statement>
 - Changing my belief (thesis) statement to ...<actual new thesis statement >
 - Getting rid of global warming content and just focusing on supporting my belief that regularly experiencing nature makes people nicer to each other. I will develop more support for this belief (thesis) statement.
2. Bulleted list of suggested changes you are NOT making (if any)
 - state suggestion briefly and say why you are not making this change
 3. Depending on what comments you received, pick the most appropriate of the following exercises which can be found on the Daily Log. These come from the *Ways of Writing* book created by the PSU Writing Center. Turn in your answers to these exercises with your revision plan. Be sure to clearly label your revision exercise answers, including naming which exercise(s) you are doing. The exercises are called "PRACTICE" and come at the end of each section. Choose at least one of the following (but consider doing them all):
 - Revising for flow (p. 54-56)—attach photocopy or photo of your cutup and rearranged essay
 - Revising for style (p. 57-61)—attach your original and minimal paragraph
 - Revising and Writing thesis statements (p. 65-68 & 72-74)—if comments on your drafts indicate you need help with your thesis statement, do both of these exercises (they are short).

Be sure to attach the copies of the peer review sheet done by others (make sure reviewers' names are on them) and the instructor's (and mentor's) comments on your draft.