Workshop: Mon. 10/31: Essay #2: Comparative Analysis Essay
Due: Two copies of workshop letters; marked-up drafts.

For next class, review each essay twice. First, read the piece aloud. Then read it
silently, writing in marginal comments/suggestions. Type a letter (1-1 ½ pgs.) to each
writer; make two copies of the letters. Your letters should let your fellow students know
a few specific strong points in the essay, as well as two or three specific things that need
work. We are interested primarily in the larger issues: voice, comparative argument, use
of secondary sources and organization. We will focus secondarily on “polishing” the
essay in terms of grammar, punctuation, etc. Here are some questions to consider:

1. Do the title and introduction engage you as a reader and set a context for the
essay? Does the writer’s choice of voice seem appropriate to the topic and
argument s/he is making? If not, what suggestions would you make? Does the
writer provide a context for understanding the importance of the topic?

2. Does the writer adequately compare different viewpoints on an issue? Is each
view fairly and equally presented? Does the organization of the comparative
analysis work well? (Typically writers choose between two strategies: (a) present
one side first, then the other (A/B) or alternate between positions, exploring
different aspects of each (A/B/A/B...) Can you make suggestions to improve the
organizational structure? Note: a good test of a comparative analysis essay is to
see if the piece can adequately educate a motivated reader about different sides of
an issue.

3. Has the author chosen appropriate secondary sources representing different points
of view? Do the sources seem credible? Has s/he integrated secondary sources
well and quoted from those sources appropriately? (Are quotes too long or too
short?) How can s/he could improve in this area? Are there any other secondary
sources (or types of sources) that you would suggest?

4. (If applicable) Does the writer integrate the interview material from his/her
community research well? (If the writer has not yet included the community
research, you can discuss this in the workshop.)

5. How effective is the conclusion in dynamically closing the piece? Does the writer
effectively stimulate reflection about different sides of an issue? Alternately, does
the author present her or his view clearly? (Remember that writers can either
affirm the importance of considering different viewpoints or take a stance.)

6. How can the writer strengthen the draft on the paragraph, sentence or word level?
Here you might comment on such issues as paragraph cohesion (are there any
paragraphs in which the sentences might be reordered?), word and sentence
structure repetition, run-on sentences, and overuse of being verbs and passive
verb constructions.