The Research Project

You are to write a 10-12 pp. research project and give a brief (8-10 minute) oral presentation on a subject related to recent developments in science, technology or medicine. “Recent” is to be interpreted as a breakthrough or paradigm-altering occurrence that has made news in the past five years.

1) You need to formulate a question that will drive your research and shape the overall trajectory of your project. “Autism,” for instance, is too broad, but here are questions you might ask about autism:

- What is the role of routine childhood immunizations in the rise in autism numbers?
- What are the parameters for defining autism and autistic disorders? Who sets these parameters?
- What has genetic research revealed about autism?
- What are the radical new treatment methods in place for autism, and are they working?
- What is the link between milk allergies and diagnosis of autism in young children?

While your paper might address the background of autism (what it is, how it is diagnosed, etc.), you can accomplish this background in an explanatory paragraph early in the paper. Your research should be directed toward answering a specific question or goal you’ve set for the project that sets limits and boundaries for your research.

2) Writing a formal proposal (due October 28)
Include:
- A solid thesis statement or research question;
- A brief outline of what you hope to cover in the paper;
- A working bibliography.

3) You will provide an ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY along with your paper, which gives a brief synopsis of what the source contained, and how it was helpful to your project.

4) You are required to consult AT LEAST five sources, three of which must be from peer-reviewed journals. You will find these using the databases we learned about on our library tour, and by old fashioned digging at the library. You may include one general-interest or personal webpage as part of your research, but no more. Googling “autism,” for instance, may give you some necessary background on the
disorder and may provide links to other, more scholarly sources, but must not replace peer-reviewed journals and published books on your topic.

5) The paper may be argumentative in nature or simply exploratory. You will want to consider all the elements of writing a good, persuasive paper we’ve explored all semester, but you do not need to “take sides” on a particular issue; you can present data and analyze that data to answer your research question.