Student-Directed Project

The Basics: The Student-Directed Project (SDP) provides students with an opportunity to explore a topic or to attempt to answer a question that interests them. This topic or question constitutes a 'field of knowledge' each student will explore in this course.

Topic: In the sixth week of class, each student will submit a project proposal in which they 'pitch' a topic to the instructor. *Topics can be anything at all*. There are only two requirements: 1. the proposed topic must be relevant to the humanities (it must be connected to human experience and values); and 2. the topic must be relevant to the student in question (the student should *actually care* about the topic). A project proposal template will be distributed and students will have class time to discuss potential topics with the instructor.

Research and Investigation: Each student must engage in research or investigation in order to explore their chosen topic or answer their question. The exact nature of student research or investigation is negotiable *but every project should include some form of academic research* (i.e. consulting peer-reviewed publications or reliable websites). Students may also opt to analyze primary sources (e.g. philosophical texts, literature, poetry, films, artworks, video games, etc.). Other appropriate forms of investigation include self-reflection (e.g. journaling), informal interviews (e.g. speaking with friends or family), and participant observation (keeping notes of lived experiences).

Medium: SDPs are to be submitted as digital files over Léa. Students can express their research, investigation, thinking, and conclusions *however they like*. Every SDP must include between 1500 and 2000 words but these words can be written or spoken. Students who wish to write traditional essays may do so, however in addition to the written or spoken component, SDPs may also involve other means of expressing student thought and conclusions such as: poetry, fiction, song, dance, artworks (painting, drawing, sculpture, textile…), film etc., as long as these can be communicated digitally (i.e. as recordings or images). The project medium should fit with the proposed topic and students will be asked to justify their proposed medium in their proposals.

Evaluation: All SDPs will be evaluated according to the project rubric (attached). The important thing is for students to *think carefully* about their proposed topic or question and to demonstrate their careful thought and analysis in their projects.

Student-Directed Project Grading Rubric

	ADVANCED	THOROUGH	ACCEPTABLE	PARTIAL	MINIMAL
QUESTION / TOPIC	The project poses a perfectly clear and insightful question and/or investigates a clearly defined and highly relevant topic. The question and/or topic connect(s) to human values and experience in a clear, well-developed, and insightful way.	The project poses a clear and interesting question and/or investigates a well-defined topic. The question and/or topic connect(s) to human values and experience in a clear meaningful way.	The project poses a straightforward question and/or investigates a general topic. The question and/or topic connect(s) to human values and experience.	The project poses a reasonably clear question and/or investigates a minimally coherent topic. The question and/or topic connect(s) to human values and experience in a basic way.	The question and/or topic are unclear. Connections to human values and experience are confused or absent.
RESEARCH PLAN	The project includes in-depth, thorough, and detailed research / investigation. Student research plan meaningfully supports clear and insightful thought process / conclusions.	The project includes thorough, appropriate, and careful research / investigation. Student research plan directly and clearly supports clear thought process / conclusions.	The project includes appropriate research / investigation. Student research plan supports thought process / conclusions.	The project includes limited research / investigation. Student research plan partially supports thought process / conclusions.	Research / Investigation is minimal or absent. Thought process / conclusions are vague, absent, or minimally connected to student research plan.
MEDIUM	Project medium is highly appropriate for chosen topic / theme(s) and provides a clear, insightful, and full expression of student learning.	Project medium is highly appropriate for chosen topic / theme(s) and provides a clear and thorough expression of student learning.	Project medium is appropriate for chosen topic / theme(s) and provides a clear expression of student learning.	Project medium is minimally appropriate for chosen topic / theme(s) and provides a partial expression of student learning.	Project medium is inappropriate for chosen topic / theme(s) and provides a minimal expression of student learning.
90% - 100%	**80% - 89%**	**70% - 79%**	**60% – 69%**	**0% – 59%**