

On the Project

One of the first things that you are asked to do in Expos is create a project statement. This can be rather confusing, as it is not a skill that most people practice extensively in high school. Here are some common errors we see in project statements. It is important to note that many of these project statements are not completely wrong, but they are incomplete. Remember to always **Finish Your Project!**

- The project statement is NOT a summary of the articles you have been assigned. This is not a proper project statement: “Blackmore discusses memes as a way of evolution while Slater talks about a doctor who changes people through plastic surgery.”
- The project statement is NOT a summary of your paper. It is not simply enough to do something like this: “In my paper I show that people want to pursue happiness but don’t succeed.” This is just a summary of a few points you will be discussing in your paper, and does not tell us what you actually think.
- The project statement is NOT a place for you to vent nothing more than your *unsubstantiated* opinions. This is not a proper project statement: “I think that people will never have happiness because they are too materialistic.”

However, the project statement SHOULD BE a combination of summary and opinion. In fact, this is an ideal project statement. Perhaps the number one suggestion we can offer to you in regards to your project statements is this: *Don’t be afraid to have a project statement that is more than a sentence long (on the other hand, don’t have a project statement that is a page long)! The more complicated your project statement, the easier it will be to write your paper.*

What should your project statement look like?

Your project statement ought to state what you agree with—which authors or what part of which authors—and (*this is important*) **WHY**. For example, “Both Blackmore and Slater talk about the ways in which humans change and evolve. The method of change implied by the meme—slower and more organic—is preferable to the alterations talked about in ‘Dr. Daedalus.’ Changing humans quickly can lead to problems—the “new” humans will have a difficult time integrating themselves into society and they might become a new “undesireable class” that is treated unequally.”

This project:

- Introduces the authors and mentions a topic that they both speak to.
- *Briefly* summarizes the each author’s opinion on the topic
- States which author you agree with, and *why*
- Names a potential problem and *why* that is a problem

This combination of summarizing positions, articulating an opinion and elaborating on that opinion make this a successful project statement.