

Praxis-to-Publics Assignment Sequence

A scaffolded pathway from close reading → analysis → public writing (op-ed / policy brief / resource guide)

Overview

This sequence helps students move from careful reading to rigorous analysis and then to a public-facing product that can circulate beyond the classroom. It is designed for courses that ask students to connect scholarship to civic life while practicing ethical research habits (clarity, citation, and risk awareness).

Learning goals

- Read closely and extract key concepts, claims, and evidence from scholarly and public texts.
- Translate an issue into a clear problem statement with attention to power, policy, and lived experience.
- Build an evidence base (sources log) and craft an argument that anticipates counterclaims.
- Produce a public-facing product that is accurate, accessible, and accountable to people most impacted.
- Practice an “impact check” before publishing or sharing work in public-facing spaces.

Sequence at a glance

Step 1 — Close Read (1 page)

Select a text (or short set of texts). Identify one key passage, define the central concept/claim, and write a short “so what?” paragraph plus one discussion question.

Step 2 — Issue Framing Memo (1 page)

Name the issue, who is impacted, and what is at stake. Add a short power map: institutions/actors, rules/policies, and where decisions get made.

Step 3 — Evidence & Sources Log (1–2 pages)

Create an annotated sources list (8–12 items). For each source: what it claims, what evidence it uses, and what it leaves out. Note contradictions and missing perspectives.

Step 4 — Claim + Counterclaim Outline (1–2 pages)

Draft your thesis, 3 supporting claims, and the best counterclaim. Identify what would change in the world if your recommendation is adopted and what harms it could unintentionally create.

Step 5 — Choose Your Public Product (draft)

Select one format: (A) Op-ed, (B) Policy brief, or (C) Resource guide. Draft in plain language and build in evidence (quotes, data, examples) without overclaiming.

Step 6 — Ethics & Impact Check (1 page)

Complete an impact check: privacy, consent, safety, representation, and usefulness. Decide what to quote, what to paraphrase, and what not to include.

Step 7 — Revision Workshop + Final Product

Revise using peer review and a checklist (argument clarity, evidence, structure, tone, and accessibility). Finalize and add a short “distribution plan” (where it could be shared or submitted).

Product options

A) Op-ed (800–1,000 words)

A clear argument for a broad public: hook, problem, evidence, what should change, and a concrete call to action.

B) Policy brief (2 pages)

A decision-maker document: problem statement, background, options, recommendation, and implementation/accountability notes.

C) Resource guide (2–3 pages)

A practical tool for a community or campus: definitions, key facts, steps people can take, and a curated list of resources.

Suggested timeline (adjust as needed)

Suggested pacing	Milestone
Week 1	Step 1
Week 2	Step 2
Week 3	Step 3
Week 4	Step 4
Week 5	Step 5 (draft)
Week 6	Step 6 + workshop
Week 7	Step 7 (final)

Instructor notes

This sequence works well as a stand-alone unit or as the backbone of a semester-long course. It can be graded as one portfolio (all steps) or as separate assignments. For community-engaged work, add a partner check-in before Step 5 and a share-back plan after Step 7.

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