Research Assignment

This research assignment must be completed for your final speech, which is designed for you to select a controversial topic and support a persuasive proposition.

Part I: Evaluating Web sites: Tutorials and Exercises
Most of you will prefer to research your topics via the Internet. We can all agree that not everything written online would be appropriate to use in a speech. As critical consumers of information we need to evaluate what we read. There are two exercises designed to help you evaluate material you read on the web. The first is from Widener University which offers instruction on evaluating the usefulness and reliability of information on the web and breaks the information down by type of website evaluated.

1. Take the Evaluate Web Pages Tutorial first (approximately five minutes) and then complete the Evaluate Web Pages Exercise. Complete the exercises and print them out to be included in this research.

http://www3.widener.edu/Academics/Libraries/Wolfgram_Memorial_Library/Evaluate_Web_Pages/659/

2. Secondly using the criteria of Author, Audience, Scholarship, Bias, Currency, and Links take this informative test. Print the final page with your score and comments.

http://169.226.11.130/divs/usered/webeval/we4.html

3. Thirdly, since not everything we read on the web is factual it is important for us to be critical consumers of information. We would do well to live by the creed Caveat Lector, which means let the reader beware. Go to John Hopkins University Sheridan Library at the link below and read about “Information and Its Counterfeits: Propaganda, Misinformation and Disinformation” Please answer the questions in the pink boxes.

http://www.library.jhu.edu/researchhelp/general/evaluating/counterfeit.html

Part II. Documenting sources in APA
A. Orally
A consideration of the audience is critical in each step of the speech making process. This means you should carefully consider your sources and why they would be considered credible to your audience. As an ethical speaker you want to assure your audience that the support material you are citing is coming from a credible source. To do that you must provide us with an oral footnote. In academic papers typically the author publication, title of the publication, and the date are provided so that the reader will know where to look up additional research on this topic. In speaking you would not want to provide us with the complete URL as that would be awkward and difficult to say. However, as an ethical speaker you would still want to provide the audience with the name of the author or the title, and sometimes the date. In general a good rule to follow is this:
if the audience would not recognize this as a credible source then you should provide us with the background of that person, institution or publication.

Here are some examples of how you might orally cite information from well known sources:

In 2007, the Centers for Disease Control reported…

The United States Department of Agriculture’s Free Range regulations state…

As reported in the most recent Congressional Quarterly…

Dr. Kramer, a columnist for The Psychiatric Times described the effects of…

But, as noted in the popular documentary An Inconvenient Truth…

However, if the source is not well known and the source’s credibility would be in doubt, you should provide some background about the expertise of the author. Here are some examples:

According to Mortgageinplode an online website which chronicles the collapse of the subprime mortgage industry…

Berna Branon, a social security analyst at the Cato Institute, a non-profit public policy research foundation headquartered in Washington, D.C., estimates that by 2042…

Robert Beckner, my FFA advisor and a nationally recognized genetic pig breeder, states…

While studying Prozac, Jerrold Rosenbaum of Harvard University discovered that…

According to “The Nation we’ve Become” a research study on the effects of poverty from Pennsylvania State University…

As reported in the journal “The progressive” an award winning series from the Chicago Sun-Times…

The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University reported family dinner…

As previously stated the CASA survey conducted at Columbia University, included some 1000 teens, and 829 parents in a national phone survey.
B. In Writing included in your outline
You are required to cite all of your sources in three places: in the text of your outline, orally footnoting as you deliver your speech, and in an APA References page.
You may have some questions about paraphrasing and directly quoting the author in your speech. Please review the helpful information about when you should paraphrase or quote and how to go about doing it in your speech or other written work.

http://www.utoronto.ca/ucwriting/paraphrase.html

Also from the University of Toronto how to use in text quotes.
http://www.utoronto.ca/ucwriting/quotations.html

Finally you may not be familiar with the American Psychological Association style of writing which is commonly used in many of the Social Sciences and some Humanities courses.

www.kevinschoepp.ca/APAtutorial/

http://www.lib.usm.edu/legacy/tutorials/apatutorial/tutorialindex.html

Part III. Written Assignment
Now that you have learned some about the mechanics of writing a paper using APA style, and you have learned some of the considerations you should keep in mind when you are evaluating sources using specific criteria, you should be ready to begin researching for your persuasive speech. The speech must set forth a proposition which is by its very nature controversial and debatable. Your audience may or may not agree with your position on this topic; therefore; it is critical that your research is clear and convincing for your audience. With that in mind, create an abbreviated annotated References list in APA style.

A You need to find 8 different sources for this assignment. You are required to use 6 sources in your speech.
B After each reference I would like you to include 2-4 short sentences
   1. How you found the source
   2. Why this particular source meets the criteria discussed in class, in your text and in the exercises that you have completed.
C Include the “Evaluate Web Pages Exercise” print out
D Include your answers and score to the “Criterion” questions
E Include your answers to “Information and Its Counterfeits: Propaganda, Misinformation and Disinformation”

This assignment is due one week before your final speech.