English 2010: Research Writing in a Persuasive Mode
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45 General Education Students:
- Read Al Gore’s “The Turning Point” (2015)
- Read Bill McKibben’s “Global Warming’s Terrifying New Math” (2015)
- Read Jeff Goodell’s “The Pentagon and Climate Change” (2016)
- Watch Leonardo DiCaprio’s Before the Flood (2016)

Assignments and Activities:
- One class session is devoted to discussing and analyzing each article for content and argumentative strategies.
- Students write responses to discussion questions about the article.
- Students write a 500-word editorial in response to the question: What should we do about climate change?
- Students watch Before the Flood as a class with discussion and response after viewing the film.
- A total of three weeks is devoted to learning about and discussing climate change.

In this course, students learn how to read and analyze texts for rhetorical strategies, do research in the library, learn the classical principles of argument, and write essays that make a central claim using research and evidence to support their perspective. The focus of the course is to teach students how to engage in civic discourse about issues of our time. I choose four controversial topics to explore as a class, such as raising the minimum wage or paying student athletes. This year I included a section about Climate Change. Students also write longer essays about topics of their choice and do a presentation for the rest of the class. Issues of environmentalism and sustainability are encouraged for individual projects.