# Evaluating Claims: Facebook Edition Assignment Prompt

**Goal**

Your goal is to determine the validity of a pseudoscientific or controversial claim.

**Role**

A Facebook friend of yours has posted one of the following claims. A debate ensues on the comment threads and your friend tags you to support him/her. You are unsure whether or not there is evidence to back it up.

* The Holocaust didn't occur – or the Holocaust, as generally reported and believed to be true, is a lie.
* 9/11 - the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center that occurred on 9/11/2001 - is a hoax or was a conspiracy orchestrated by the US government.
* The US did not land on the moon as reported in 1969.
* The Earth is flat.
* Intelligent Design – or the belief that a single intelligent creator designed the universe – is a valid scientific theory to explain the universe.
* Crystals have healing properties.
* Acupuncture can treat or heal sickness, illness, or disease.
* Homeopathy can treat or heal sickness, illness, or disease.
* Ancient aliens visited the planet and made contributions to humanity and/or history.
* Throughout history and in the present day, extraterrestrials (aliens) have abducted human beings.
* Ghosts exist.
* Bigfoot, or Sasquatch, exists.
* Vaccines cause autism.

**Audience**

The target audience is a true believer, the person who told you this claim and presented it as fact.

**Situation**

You will be expected to find evidence to either support the claim or reject the claim. You will further be expected to explain how you came to your conclusion and why the sources you've consulted are credible.

**Products/ Performances**

You are presenting your evidence supporting/ rejecting the claim to your friend. You will present your findings in a two-page paper formatted in MLA style (8th edition). In your paper, you will either defend the claim using evidence from your sources *or* reject the claim using evidence from your sources. Throughout your paper, you will use your sources as references by either quoting or paraphrasing from them.

**Standards**

The sources you list in your Works Cited/ References page must withstand critical evaluation and appraisal.

* At least six sources will be referenced throughout your paper and listed in the Works Cited section.
* At least one source will come from a supporter of the claim. At least one source will come from a detractor of the claim – or someone skeptical of the claim.
* At least three sources will come from library databases.
* At least one source will be a video essay, documentary video, or other audio-visual format. (These can be found on library databases *and/or* online.)
* *Only sources you reference by quoting or paraphrasing within your paper get listed in the Works CIted list. If you do not refer to the source in the paper – explicitly – it will not appear in your references list.*