**Assignment 3**: Definite an “ism”

Definition is especially important when we use words that signify controversial or contested ideas. Terms such as “fairness,” “family,” “feminism,” “evolution,” “terrorism,” “human rights,” “political correctness,” and “sustainability” have many meanings and provide the foundation for a thoughtful argument. Whenever we use such terms, we need to let listeners and readers know exactly how we are using them. Although we can make words mean different things, we can do so only if our language community—the people with whom we speak most frequently—agrees to share the meaning with us.

The purpose of your definition essay will be to inform or argue by classifying a term in a broad category (class) and then differentiating that term from other terms in the same category by stating its distinguishing characteristics.

For this assignment, I ask you to define **an “ism**” that needs some explanation. Here are some examples:

Narcissism

Chauvenism

Sexism

Parochialism

Materialism

Neo-Platonism

Cynicism

Please avoid commonly known concepts such as “socialism” and “capitalism.”

**Requirement:**

1000 words

At least 4 external resources

12 point Times New Roman, 1-inch margins, double spaced

Due dates

Sun 10/30 first draft due on blackboard (5pm)

Sun 11/06 second draft due on blackboard (5pm)

Thurs 11/09 Final draft due 5pm (blackboard + print-out)

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ENG1300 Assignment 3

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**What is Marxism?**  
 Marxism is an economic and social system based upon the political and economic theories of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. While it would take veritably volumes to explain the full implications and ramifications of the Marxist social and economic ideology, Marxism is summed up in the Encarta Reference Library as *“a theory in which class struggle is a central element in the analysis of social change in Western societies.”* Marxism is the antithesis of capitalism which is defined by Encarta as “an economic system based on the private ownership of the means of production and and distribution of goods, characterized by a free competitive market and motivation by profit” (20). Marxism is the system of socialism of which the dominant feature is public ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange.