From Syllabus:
Research Paper & Group Discussions: Examining Research in the Media (6 pages): During the first week of class you will be assigned a group which you will meet with several times across the semester. Each of you will chose a topic at a different stage of the lifespan (infancy, childhood, etc.). When you turn arrives you will present information about your topic to the whole class. You will lead a discussion with your group about your topic and present what you discussed to the class. You will prepare for these presentations and discussions by writing a paper that examines research on your topic and how it is presented in the media. For example, you read several articles and decided to choose ADHD in childhood as your topic. The article was written by a journalist at the NY times reporting on research done in New Mexico on a program claiming to cure ADHD with computer training programs. You first will read the actual research paper that the NY times article is based on. Did the journalist report the research accurately? Did s/he exaggerate or misinterpret? You will use the media article and the research article to write your paper, prepare your presentation, and your discussion. Everyone in your group will have read/watched your media sources before your discussion and will bring questions to class for discussion.
Paper and Presentation Organizational Outline Lifespan 220

For illustration in explaining the paper consider the following topic, "Fathers who actively engage in raising their children can help make their offspring smarter and better behaved, according to new research from Concordia University," taken from the example article on moodle.

Papers should be typed in 12 point Times New Roman font with 1 inch margins. Turn in a printed copy of your paper and a photocopy of your research article on the day you discuss and present.

1) APA style Title Page: Describe the topic in detail, including information from your textbook (3-4 paragraphs, about one page)

a) What is the background of your topic & why is it important?

i) For example, why do we care about fathers in development? How does being a having a father in one's life affect development in general? Your book will likely have good background information on your topic (e.g. pg 190).

ii) What theme(s) or concept is it related to that we discussed in class? Which major principle of development/metamodel helps us to understand your topic?

1) In our example you would most likely choose to talk about Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model as a father figure is a microsystem influence.

2) In addition, you could choose principle number 2 (Physical, Cognitive and Socioemotional Development are interrelated) to describe how the parenting relationship of the father affected the cognitive domain.

2) Main Body of Paper: Critical Thinking (about 4 pages)

a) Describe the research. (Read the hypotheses, methods section, skim the results, and discussion of your journal article carefully to write this section)

i) What kind of methodology (surveys, interviews observation etc.) was used? And what are the strengths and weaknesses of your study based on the methods that they used?

ii) What kind of design (correlational, quasi-experimental, experimental) was employed?

1) And what are the strengths and weaknesses of your study based on the design that they used?

2) What conclusions can be made? In other words, can cause and effect be claimed?

3) For example, active engagement from fathers predicts better behavior and higher intellectual abilities as they grew older. Careful reading of the journal article revealed there was no comparison between groups, or random assignment. Thus, the finding is correlational and not a cause and effect relationship.
(4) What kind of developmental design was used? (cross-sectional, longitudinal, sequential?)

(a) If no developmental design was used, how is that a limitation of the study?

(b) If a developmental design was used, what are the relative strengths and limitations of that design as it pertains to your study?

(5) What were the main findings?

b) Critically compare the original research article with the journalist article. How accurately did the journalist represent the findings and the limitations? Did the journalist exaggerate? Did they overstate the conclusion?

2) Conclusion (3 to 4 paragraphs, about 1 page)

a) What questions remain unanswered regarding your topic in your mind?

b) What are the next steps you would propose for a future study—tell me what that study would look like (maybe you would suggest observational methods if that has not been done or a quasi-experiment to get a closer idea of cause and effect, be specific)

c) What is the take away message for the class on this research based on your analysis? What is the main point you would “teach” the class about this issue and how it informs us about development. What does it illustrate from class?

d) Can and how should this research be applied in the real world to help people?

3) References (start on a separate page)

a) Provide an APA style references for both your media and your journal article.

4) Discussion Questions (start on a separate page)

a) Prepare a list of about five thought provoking discussion questions for your group.

b) Some general ideas for to get you started writing discussion questions:

(1) What kind of method/design/developmental design etc. did you think this was. Discuss disagreements.

(2) Based on the methods/design, what can be concluded—can you determine cause (pose this question to the group and help them understand why or why not based on your reading of the journal article).

(3) Discuss how the media article exaggerated or left out information. Develop questions for your group based on the differences you found.

(4) Discuss what the implications of the findings are—who could they help? Who should know about them (teachers, parents, doctors etc.)

(5) After reading this article did you think of ways of changing your own life?
(6) How does this finding/research connect to themes/topics from the class?

(7) Could this research be translated into an intervention strategy? (A program informed by research that could be sponsored by a nonprofit or by the government that is instituted in hospitals, schools, or other programs that is designed to change people's lives for the better.)

5) Presentation (start on a separate sheet)

a) In 2 to 3 sentences state why your topic is important for development.

b) In 2 to 3 sentences explain which metamodel or principle your topic is related to.

c) Restate the main finding, not in details, but broadly. Remember the class has read the media article.

d) What was the highlight from your groups discussion (did you discuss how this affects real life how it could help people, what we should change... did you debate something? Did you discuss a way future research could better answer the question?

e) Finally, what is the main take away message?