

Research Paper Topics AMH 1020/2020

- Lincoln Assassination
- Grant Presidency
- Dawes Act: Fair or Unjust?
- Wounded Knee Massacre
- Agrarian Revolt
- Knights of Labor
- Scopes Monkey Trial
- Social Darwinism/Social Gospel
- Progressive Movement
- Women's Suffrage Movement
- Child Labor Movement
- Booker T. Washington
- W.E.B. Dubois
- Martin Luther King
- Economy in the Gilded Age
- Haymarket Riot
- Pullman Strike
- Panic of 1873
- Panic of 1893
- Origins of Blues and Jazz
- Panic of 1907
- Great Depression
- Spanish-American War
- Sinking of the U.S.S. Maine
- Theodore Roosevelt Presidency
- Taft Presidency
- Failure of the Schlieffen Plan
- US Entry into WWI
- German Responsibility for WWI
- Wilson Presidency
- Versailles Treaty

- Hoover Presidency
- New Deal
- Eleanor Roosevelt
- Indian Reorganization Act
- Munich Conference
- British Attack on the French Fleet at Mers-El-Kebir
- Pearl Harbor Attack
- Battle of Stalingrad
- Battle of Kursk
- D-Day
- Battle of Okinawa
- Gen. George S. Patton
- RAF/USAAF Bombing of Dresden
- Atomic Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki
- Berlin Crisis
- Korean War
- Origins of Rock and Roll
- Cuban Missile Crisis
- Gulf of Tonkin Incident
- Kennedy Assassination
- MLK Assassination
- Malcolm X
- Kennedy Presidency
- Space Race
- LBJ Presidency
- Reagan Presidency
- Birthright Citizenship
- Prohibition/Temperance Movement
- Reconstruction
- Dystopian Literature
- "Hippie" Movement
- Vietnam War

Research Paper

AMH 2010/AMH 2020

Instructor: Glenn R. Swift

- **Word Length:** 2000 words
- **Topic:** Student's choice (subject to professor's approval) of any significant topic in American History that pertains to the corresponding time period of the course:
(AMH 2010 — 1492-1877; AMH 2020 — 1877-Present)
- **Topic Due Date:** Students must inform the professor of the topic of their research paper exactly *two weeks after the beginning of class*.
- **Objective:** The assignment is to write a *historiographical* research paper. In a nutshell, historiography is the "history of history." Rather than subjecting actual events, such as the Emancipation Proclamation, to historical analysis, the subject of historiography is *the history of the history of the event*, meaning the manner in which scholars have written about the subject, that is, the sometimes-conflicting objectives pursued by those writing about the event over time and the way in which such factors have shaped our understanding of the event.

Of course, there should be a brief summary of your topic to provide context for the reader. However, this is NOT a narrative essay on a historical topic. *The objective of this paper is to explore the specific opinions of at least three scholars on the topic of your paper. These opinions may or may not be contradictory but more a matter of emphasis.* For example, there are varying views among historians concerning Lincoln's motivation behind issuing the Emancipation Proclamation. Some assert that Lincoln's executive order was primarily a wartime measure specifically designed to cripple the Southern economy by encouraging slaves to run away. Others see it as a means to take the war to a higher moral plain, that is, a war of liberation as well as to save the Union. Others see the proclamation

as a strategy to reduce the possibility that Great Britain and/or France might enter the war on the side of the Confederacy by making it politically impossible to do so in light of both nations' firm positions on slavery. Then again, there are those who accept all of these arguments as clear motivations behind the measure while emphasizing one factor more than others.

- **Sources: Minimum of Three Secondary Sources** (books, periodicals, and Internet sources are acceptable; however, *all web-based sources must be pre-approved by the professor.*)
- **Style Guidelines/Formatting/Citations: MLA** (e.g., Times New Roman/12 Point Font; Double-Spaced; No Cover Page; Half-Inch Paragraph Indentation, etc.) For more information on MLA formatting, visit [https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/.](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/))
- **Structure:** *The paper should be comprised of an **Introduction** (100-150 words) that contains both a topic sentence and a thesis statement; **Main Body** (1700-1800 words) that parallels the Introduction; and a **Conclusion** (100-150 words) that summarizes the Main Body and also parallels the Introduction. In addition, your Introduction should include a brief explanation of three specific historical perspectives on your topic. **Most importantly, your introduction must include a clear and concise thesis statement. However, you do not have to embrace one of the three perspectives in your thesis. The purpose of this assignment is to encourage an objective study of a historical topic. Thus, an acceptable introductory paragraph for a historiographical research paper on the Emancipation Proclamation could be as follows:***

The Emancipation Proclamation was one of the most important milestones in American history. Issued by President Abraham Lincoln on January 1, 1863 in the midst of our nation's bloodiest conflict, this historic act continues to spark controversy among leading scholars of Civil War history. The debate focuses on the primary motivation behind Lincoln's

decision. This paper will examine three of the most popular theories and present each in a clear, concise and objective manner.

- In the Main Body, you will explain the three arguments, citing the various scholars and key supporting facts behind each.
- In the Conclusion, you will briefly summarize each argument. You may wish to confirm the historical significance of your topic and the importance at looking at all scholarly opinions to better understand its complexity.
- **Works Cited:** In accordance with MLA formatting, the paper should include a Works Cited page at the end that contains *all source material*.

General Comments: *Your work should be thoroughly proofed with careful attention paid to proper punctuation, grammar and paragraph structure. You should avoid colloquialisms, contractions and writing in the first-person. In addition, there should be no block quotes in a paper of this length. Use your paraphrasing skills.*

Honors Projects: Any student interested in doing a Honors Project should let the professor know as early in the semester as possible. (A student must be admitted to the Honors College prior to approval of the project.) Honors Projects must be a minimum of **4000 words** and include an **Annotated Bibliography**. *Note: Summer students are not eligible for a honors project.*

Deadline: *The research paper is due via e-mail in a Microsoft Word/PDF doc to swiftg@palmbeachstate.edu by 5pm December 8 as specified in the syllabus. (No other file formats will be accepted.) Most importantly, the deadline is final and no work will be accepted afterwards.*

Grading Rubric

Satisfies the Objectives of the Assignment (25%)

- **Historiography (12.5%):** Is the paper truly historiographical or written primarily as a narrative historical essay?
- **Research: (12.5%):** Is the paper well researched? Are the sources reputable? Are the opinions of three scholars/schools of thought clearly articulated and supported by the evidence cited? Are the opinions of the historians balanced or are one or two more heavily weighted?

Quality of Writing (65%)

- **Sentence Structure (5%):** Are sentences well written? Are there smooth transitions between sentences and paragraphs? Does the writer alter the cadence of the writing? Does the writer refrain from using colloquialisms instead of academic language? Does the writer refrain from using contractions?
- **Paragraph Structure (5%):** Are paragraph breaks where they should be? Are paragraphs well-constructed with introductory and summary sentences?
- **Citations (5%):** Are all original ideas/facts accurately cited? Does the author overuse citations or employ paraphrases? Are the paraphrases accurate?
- **Grammar/Punctuation/Verb-Subject Agreement (15%):** Is the paper thoroughly proofed to reflect a college-level assignment?
- **Introduction (15%):** Does the writer introduce his/her topic in a well-written introductory paragraph? Does the writer "hook" the reader with a topic sentence that expresses the historical significance of the subject? Does the writer clearly state the objective of the paper with a strong thesis statement?
- **Main Body (15%):** Does the content in the Main Body support the objectives of the paper as expressed in the thesis statement?

- **Conclusion (5%): Does the writer accurately summarize the arguments made in the Main Body in the Conclusion? Does the Conclusion confirm the Introduction?**

MLA Formatting (10%)

Title Page (1%): Does the title page comply with MLA formatting?

Citations (3%): Are citations formatted properly?

Page Numbers (1%): Are page numbers consistent with MLA guidelines?

Margins (1%): Are margins consistent with MLA guidelines?

Paragraph Style (1%): Are paragraphs properly formatted?

Works Cited Page (3%): Are references properly listed?