

History 110A & 110B, Fall 2014: Term Paper Assignment

Writing a term paper is an accepted way to determine a history student's ability to research and obtain information, and to assess and discuss that information critically. In this class, your term paper effort will contribute 30% toward your final course grade. **Plan accordingly!** Here are the steps in the process:

STEP ONE: CHOOSE A TOPIC and SUBMIT A TOPIC PROPOSAL

1.a) You must **choose your own term paper topic**, and **Dr. Myers must accept that topic**. Here are the rules:

- The topic you choose must be about a person, issue or event within the time periods and the topical fields respectively covered in the course.
 - ✓ For students in History 110A, this means **nothing later than 1500 C.E. and nothing about a pre-literate culture.**
 - ✓ For students in History 110B, **nothing earlier than about 1450 C.E.**
- The topic you choose must not be a simple biography or recitation of events; it must contain critical analysis of persons and events, and must be of **sufficient intellectual complexity to reflect college-level work.**
- The topic **should not be too broad!** Rather it should focus on a specific event, individual, group, or belief; this aspect must allow you to demonstrate your abilities for analysis. For example: **DO NOT pose as a topic a broad statement such as:** "I want to write about the life of Alexander the Great [for 110A]" or "What Happened in World War Two [for 110B]." Instead, focus on a specific question to answer, such as: "Was Alexander really 'Great?' [for 110A]" or "How did the development of tanks impact how World War Two was fought? [for 110B]"
- The topic you choose **may be about a subject of personal interest**, but focused tightly on a specific aspect. Again, here are some examples: "The History of Dance in the Modern Era" is too broad and may lead to an "encyclopedia article" paper with description but no analysis. Instead, researching a specific question such as "How were Popular Dance Styles Influenced by non-European Cultures in the Twentieth Century" would be acceptable.
- **Topics specifically pertaining to American (U.S.) history are not acceptable for this paper.** However, *for students in History 110B only*, I will accept a topic of personal or family history such as "Why [and/or How] Did My Family Migrate to the United States?" as long as some family member who participated in the migration is still alive and is

willing to be interviewed on this topic (that interview becomes a primary source).

- If the topic of migration is chosen then the finished paper **must include a description and analytical discussion of the economic conditions, political policies and personalities of the abusive regime** in the old country.
- If your topic proposal is not initially accepted by Dr. Myers you will be asked to meet with him during office hours to negotiate a suitable topic.

1.b) Pose your paper topic in the form of a question which will be answered by your research. I call this the “topical question.” This is a crucial step to focus your research!

1.c) You must submit a “TERM PAPER TOPIC PROPOSAL.” One or two pages, typewritten, is sufficient. The proposal must tell Dr. Myers: 1) **WHAT** you intend to write about (**Be specific, as discussed above**); 2) **WHY** you chose that topic; and 3) **HOW** your investigation of this paper is important to your understanding of history.

- **You MUST express your topic in the form of a question which you will analyse and answer in the text of your paper.**
- Your Term Paper Topic Proposal must be turned in on the date announced in class. **Failure to do this on time will result in receiving an “F” on the term paper assignment!**
- **No electronically-sent Topic Proposal Forms will be accepted!**
- If your topic proposal is initially not accepted by Dr. Myers you will be asked to meet with him during office hours to negotiate a suitable topic. **Dr. Myers MUST approve your proposed topic before you can proceed any further with the assignment.**

1.d) Once approved, the Topic Proposal Form becomes a contract between student and professor, specifying what you intend to write about (the “topical question”), and any agreed modifications to help you focus your research.

- **Once Dr. Myers has approved your topic proposal, you MAY NOT CHANGE your term paper topic,** so be sure you can find enough research material to answer the topical question!
- **Save the copy of your topic proposal signed by Dr. Myers and turn it in with your finished paper!!!! Failure to do this will result in the receipt of an “F” grade on this project,** and I don’t want to do that to you any more than you wish to receive one.

STEP TWO: CONDUCT RESEARCH

2.a) As soon as you learn that your topic has been approved, you should immediately begin to do your research. At any time during the research and writing of your paper you are welcome

to see Dr. Myers to seek assistance or encouragement. (Office Hours: MWF 6-8am, 9-10am-11am-noon; also M&W only 1-2pm.)

2.b) A research paper is one in which you have found sources of information (both traditional published and electronic) sufficient to give you enough knowledge about your selected topic that you can analyse it in thoughtful detail. You must find **BOTH primary sources and secondary sources.**

- If these sources are a narrative or chronicle of events written by those who experienced the events firsthand, the document is a **PRIMARY SOURCE.** These may be letters, eye-witness accounts, literary works, reports, laws or records of legal proceedings, diaries, pleas to deities, or official records. These are important because of their invaluable insight into the events and the cultural beliefs (or prejudices?) of the original authors.
 - Fordham University maintains several “sourcebook” websites containing primary sources translated into English.
- If the sources are interpretive essays written secondhand by persons who have studied events of earlier times, these are **SECONDARY SOURCES.** These may be essays, journal articles, textbooks, or other reviews, and are valuable for their interpretation of past events and cultures. (They are also of interest to historians studying changing trends in the interpretation of historic events—we call this historiography.) The main text of your textbook is a **SECONDARY SOURCE,** although the textbook also contains some **PRIMARY SOURCE** accounts.
 - Useful secondary sources also include the articles regularly published in the numerous academic journals written by and for historians; many of these can be found on the “JSTOR” website.

2.c) You may use your textbook (both text and primary source readings) as sources for your research. Any explanatory or interpretive text (including the introductory essays to primary source readings) is considered a **SECONDARY SOURCE.** Document readings in the textbook (but not the introductory essays before the actual text of the reading) are considered to be **PRIMARY SOURCES.**

2.d) In your finished paper you must find, read, quote from and cite **at least TEN different sources.**

- **Repeated citations from the same source count as only ONE source.**
- **FIVE** of these sources must be from traditional printed materials (books, magazines, newspapers, academic journals, etc.); **EXCEPT** that “traditional” publications reissued through electronic sites such as JSTOR, Project Gutenberg, or similar “republication sites” available through the University’s Pollak Library computers will count as “traditional” rather than electronic sources **IF THEY ONCE HAD BEEN TRADITIONALLY PUBLISHED.**

- The remaining **five** sources may come from electronic sources (internet, e-zines, CD-ROMs, etc.). **Students are advised that use of materials from non-academic or non-refereed electronic sources such as Wikipedia or blogs might not meet university-level standards of research quality.**
- **TEN total sources (each cited in your finished paper at least once) are the minimum number of sources required; you may use more.**
 - **At least three of these sources MUST be PRIMARY SOURCES.**

STEP THREE: WRITE YOUR PAPER

3.a) Your paper must present facts intended to answer the topical question you have posed, and should incorporate analysis of the information you have uncovered. **Stated facts which are not simple recitation of general knowledge MUST be supported by cited sources.** Your discussion of facts should be analytical, not speculative in tone.

- The resulting paper should not be a “propaganda piece” exclusively supporting one point of view. The paper must be in the form of an investigation, answering the question you posed in your proposal, and containing a balance of review and ANALYSIS, presented with fair and honest critical thought achieved through valid research using a variety of available sources. The analytical portion of your detailed topical investigation must contain either a “compare and contrast” component or an analytical “problem solving” component; in some cases, inclusion of BOTH components may be appropriate.
- Dr. Myers is interested in (and will grade upon) your understanding and synthesis (analysis) of the material, and how well you formulate information into a cogent argument!
- **Avoid “information dumps,”** that is, the quoting or paraphrasing of very lengthy sources with the obvious intention of adding page length to your essay.
- **Avoid writing “encyclopedia articles”** in which all you do is present facts or information with no attempt to perform critical analysis and arrive at a thoughtful conclusion to your topical question.
- **The analytical body of your paper may also include discussion of an historiographic controversy,** that is, an issue about which historians disagree; if so, the discussion should explain that disagreement (both sides) and explain why that disagreement is relevant to an understanding of the topic about which you have selected to research and write.

3.b) A reminder about plagiarism: You must write your assignment in your own words. **If borrowing either the ideas OR words of another person, you MUST acknowledge this with the use of quotation marks AND correct footnote citations!** Not to do so is considered

plagiarism. **Plagiarism and the submission of work that is not one's own** (for example, purchasing—or stealing without citation—all or parts of a paper online) or **reusing a paper originally written for another class** are examples of academic dishonesty. Students are reminded that they should familiarize themselves with the University's policies on academic ethics and academic dishonesty.

3.c) You may submit a first draft if you wish, but be sure that you give Dr. Myers enough time to read it and for you to make corrections to your paper. **Dr. Myers will not accept any drafts for review less than ONE WEEK before the final paper is due. Plan accordingly!!**

- Students uncertain of their writing skills or command of grammar or usage are encouraged to consult the University's writing centre.

STEP FOUR: STYLE GUIDE

4.a) This paper must be written using the "Chicago Manual" (also known as "Turabian") format, which calls for the use of footnotes to cite sources of information.

4.b) The style guide for this assignment is Jules R. Benjamin, *A Student's Guide to History* (9th, 10th, 11th, 12th or 13th editions) that was assigned for this class. This guide is useful to correctly format footnote and bibliography citations (found in Chapter 8 in the 11th edition, or Chapter 10 in the 12th edition), but also for information on other grammar issues as well. The Benjamin book offers a clear explanation of the "Chicago Manual style" which is the required style format for this paper.

- **In the case of any differences between the style instructions given in the Benjamin book and those in this document, the instructions in this document prevail.**
 - Note that I require a title page of a slightly different format than is given in the Benjamin example.
 - NOTE ALSO that I require footnotes to be placed at the bottom of each page of text (as needed), rather than as endnotes at the end of the text.

4.c) General Notes:

- **Do not use APA or MLA format guides.**
- The order of the finished paper should be: 1) cover sheet, 2) text of paper, 3) maps and/or illustrations, if any, 4) the "List of Works Cited" (the bibliography), and 5) the ORIGINAL "Term Paper Topic Proposal" signed by Dr. Myers (not a rewritten copy or Xerox copy of that document). All of these papers must be **stapled together in the upper left-hand corner.**
- The paper must have margin spacing of 1-inch on top, bottom, left and right sides.

4.c1) Cover Sheet:

- The cover sheet must follow the stylistic design and content of that which appears on this assignment handout. Think up a creative and eye-catching title, which may use a font other than Times New Roman, but should not be larger than 32 points in size.
- It is not necessary to illustrate the cover with any form of artwork, but such artwork is not prohibited.
- The cover sheet is **NOT page one**; no page numbering should appear on the cover sheet.

4.c2) Text or Body of paper:

- The text or body finished paper must be **ten full pages** of text, although longer is acceptable. Note that “ten full pages” means ten full pages with a few lines carrying over to page eleven.
- Any artwork, graphics or illustrations, if used in your paper (such usage is optional), must be placed after the last page of text. Such graphics must be placed on separate pages at the end of the paper’s text, **not in the body of the text**. Those “graphics pages” will not count toward the ten pages of text requirement.
- The title on the cover sheet and the title on the top line of the first page of text must be worded identically. On the first page of text this title should be centered and written in bold type font, but no larger than 16-points in size. **On the first page of text, the first line of text should begin one double space below the title.**
- On the first page of text, DO NOT put your name, space, class name, space, my name, space, etc. All of this information should be on the cover sheet in the format shown. If I see such an addition I will assume you were trying to fill space because you were short of enough information, and you grade will be negatively impacted.
- **Pages must be numbered in the upper right corner of each page of text, and the bibliography, but not on the cover sheet.** Page number style (in 12-point Times New Roman type) may be either a simple number or “student’s last name dash number” (Myers-10).
- The **text** should be written using **Times New Roman font, using 12-point size**; the text should be double spaced with no additional points of line spacing added.
 - **EXCEPTION: Block quotes** (direct quotes at least three sentences long) must be presented as a separate paragraph, indented one tab stop from the left margin, in **SINGLE SPACE** format.

- **EXCEPTION: Footnotes** are presented in 10-point type size, single spaced, with **no blank space between footnotes**.
- Insert TWO SPACES between sentences, not just one space.
- **Remember that in a double spaced paper, PARAGRAPHS ARE SEPARATED BY ONE DOUBLE SPACE, not two double spaces**; in other words, the space separation between paragraphs should appear to be the same as between lines inside a paragraph. **Do not place any kerning or extra spacing between lines!!!**
- The right margin of text must be ragged (as in this instruction guide), NOT printed with an even edge. Do not place any “kerning” or spacing between individual letters.¹

4.c3) Quoting Sources and Information

- **Whenever you make a statement of fact that is not common knowledge, you must tell the reader HOW you know this**; that is, what is the source of your information.
 - A common knowledge fact might be “The Eiffel Tower is located in Paris,” for which no citation is needed. The more specific fact that “the tower was built to be the entrance arch to the 1889 World's Fair in Paris” is NOT general knowledge and must be cited from a reputable source.
 - When you write a statement in your paper, ask yourself “how do I know this?” If the answer is “I read/saw/heard it at . . .” then you must cite it, as the information came from another source.
- Use care in your selection of direct quotations. It is tempting to use direct quotations because it is much easier to use someone else’s words than to make them up yourself. Try to follow these suggestions for the use of direct (verbatim) quotes:
 - Quote directly when you need the exact words in order to make your point.
 - Quote directly when what you claim or draw attention to is so outrageous or controversial that no one would believe you unless you used the exact words.
 - Quote directly when the source has said what you wish to say so well that you could not possibly say it better in your own words.
- **Paraphrase rather than quote directly wherever possible.** It is usually sufficient to summarise what an author says. **Just like direct quotations, however, paraphrases (repeating someone else’s words in your own words) also must be cited,** even if you are

¹ This is an example of letter kerning, which is prohibited.

paraphrasing an argument which extends over several pages.

- **If your entire paragraph of text contains direct quotes or summaries of information from one specific source**, it is acceptable to place one footnote citation at the end of that paragraph, as long as the citation covers all of the pages of the original source.
- Direct quotations up to TWO SENTENCES in length must be placed in the text using the same double spacing as the remainder of the text; such a quotation must be marked by placing double quotation marks (“such as these”) at the start and stop of the quotation.
- Direct quotations of three sentences or longer must be placed as a block quote (called a long quote in the Benjamin book), which must be written as a separate paragraph indented one tab stop (0.5 inch) in from the left margin and **typed in single space format**. Do not use quotation marks at the beginning or end of a block quote, because the difference in spacing style is the indicator to the reader.²

4.c4) Footnote Citations

- **All citations in the text must appear as footnotes (at the bottom of each text page) not as endnotes (all placed at the end of the paper).**³
- Footnote numbers must be continuous through the entire paper, not renewed on each page, and must be in the form of Arabic numbers NOT Roman numerals, letters, or other symbols.
- **NEVER, never, never** reuse the same footnote number, even if you are referring to the same source or the same location within a source!!! Each separate citation uses a new number even if it cites the same source cited earlier in your paper!
- The footnote number citing the source of a quote is placed after the punctuation mark at the end of the last sentence of the quotation. **Closing quotation marks must be placed after the punctuation mark which ends the sentence, but before a footnote number.**
- **Never place a footnote in the middle of a sentence!** If two separate sources are cited in the same sentence, consider rewriting it to make two sentences.
- **Footnotes** should be in Times New Roman font, single spaced and in **10-point size**. **No additional space should be placed to separate footnote lines or entries** (as is shown below).

² Consult Benjamin, p, 138 (in 11th edition).

³ This is the correct way to put a footnote at the bottom of your text page. If you don't know how to do this, see Dr. Myers as soon as possible. If you use Microsoft Word, it is very easy!