

## **Paper Guidelines**

In the three 5-page papers, you will do history, not just read and talk about it. On the basis of primary and secondary sources, you will propose and support a historical thesis.

We will talk more in class about what makes a good paper, but here are a few pointers to keep in mind:

- I will suggest paper topics for each unit. You are not restricted to these topics; you may come up with your own topic, but you should make sure that it can be addressed on the basis of the assigned readings.
- If you think you want to write a paper on a unit, decide early, so you can do the readings with your paper in mind. That will save you some time later on.
- Your paper should not simply address a topic; it should answer a question. Your introduction should state why the question is important; your thesis should be the answer.
- Finally, the paper should relate your specific question to a broader historical problem that it helps to illuminate. The essential questions for each unit provide some guidance for identifying historical problems.

This sequence of topic, question, and problem is discussed in more detail in Part 2 of Booth, Colomb, and Williams, *The Craft of Research*, cited below on this handout.

### **Rules for your papers**

1. You must hand in the first paper by October 10, the second by November 14, and the third by December 5. If a paper is late, the maximum grade possible will be reduced by one-half letter grade for each working day it is late unless you make arrangements with me ahead of time.
2. You may write only one paper on each unit. However, you may write your three papers on units 1, 2, and 3 if you like, or any combination of units, provided that I receive your papers by the deadlines above.
3. Your paper must use the assigned primary and secondary source readings, and it should deal with all the assigned sources that are relevant to your argument. You may refer to additional secondary sources only if they are journal articles published within the last twenty years. If you would like an exception to this rule, you must request it in writing (e-mail is fine) at least five days before the paper is due. I want the papers to reflect what you can do with the material presented in class.
4. Your paper should be approximately five double-spaced pages long (approximately 1250-1500 words). It must be typed. It must include *both* footnotes *and* a bibliography. Put your name, the class number, and the date on the top of the first page, followed by a title, and then the text of the paper; you do not need a separate title page. Page numbers are required.

### **Grading**

I expect that a B paper will show an adequate command of historical thinking and writing: that is, it will (1) use appropriate evidence in support of (2) a clear, coherent argument that (3) demonstrates a focused thesis. It will do so in (4) correct standard English, with correct spelling and punctuation. Papers that do not meet these expectations will receive a grade below B. Papers that exceed them will receive an A or AB. My expectations are set out further in the handout on paper grading criteria and the sample comment sheet.

If you are dissatisfied with your grade, you may rewrite the paper and resubmit it. The new grade will replace the old grade. You may hand in only one revision—but you are free to see me in office hours and to get advice from friends, the Writing Center, or other sources before you hand it in. There is one exception: if you fail a paper due to academic dishonesty, you may not rewrite it.

(please turn over)

### **Online style sheet and writing guide**

The course home page has links to the History Department style sheet for papers and to the online version of a booklet by Gordon Harvey, *Writing with Sources*. You should look at both of these guides before handing in your papers. In case of disagreement between the History Department style sheet and *Writing with Sources*, follow the History Department guidelines. If you have any questions about these guides, please ask.

### **Getting help**

The University Writing Center provides assistance with paper writing in any course. You can drop in while the Center is open. There is a link to the Center's page, including its hours, on the History 304 home page.

### **Additional resources for writing papers**

Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *The craft of research*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995. This book is an excellent guide to the process of carrying out and reporting on research, regardless of the scholarly discipline. It explains how to go from a topic to a question and a problem, how to read sources, and how to construct an argument that will convince your readers.

Turabian, Kate L. *A manual for writers of term papers, theses, and dissertations*. 6th ed. Revised by John Grossman and Alice Bennett. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996. Turabian's manual explains and provides rules for the standard format used in term papers in history, including footnotes and bibliography entries. If you have a question about style that is not addressed by the online resources, you can check Turabian.