

## **Assignment: Final ten-page paper**

### **Due dates:**

—Annotated bibliography: Tues., March 27, 2:30 PM (draft)

—First draft and oral presentation: Thurs., May 3, or Tues., May 8, 2:30 PM

—Final draft: Tues., May 22, noon (with course portfolio)

The final paper for this course is an independent research report. For this report, you will choose a specific topic within the history of witchcraft and write a ten- to fifteen-page report on it. (10-15 pages is about 2500-4000 words.) You may choose the topic you did for the bibliography assignments, or you may choose a different topic.

Your paper should be a report to a documentary filmmaker who is planning a documentary on the history of witchcraft. The filmmaker wants her documentary to be as historically truthful as possible, and she wants to use both selected primary sources and “talking heads” to present the material. As such, your report should include the following elements:

1. A statement of the current research questions and problems in your topic area (at least one problem, at most three). For a definition of research questions and problems, see Booth et al., *The Craft of Research*, chapters 3 and 4. This statement should include references to the material on your annotated bibliography (see below).

2. A brief summary of the most convincing contemporary research (published in the last 30 years) on the problem or problems you identified. Explain why you find the results most convincing. Indicate in footnotes where the authors teach or live and whether they are still alive and can be talking heads for the film.

3. A choice of excerpts from primary sources that could be used to illustrate the topic and answer the research questions you identified in section 2. Your excerpts should be no more than 150 words long (you may condense them with ellipses, as long as you are explicit about your omissions and they do not distort the meaning of the source), and you should explain how they address the research questions and problems.

4. An annotated bibliography of at least five monographs, five journal articles, and five published primary sources (beyond those in Kors and Peters). If you read any European languages besides English, I encourage you to seek out and include material in those languages. The numbers given are minimums; feel free to include more! A draft of the annotated bibliography will be due after Spring Break.

As you can see from the requirements, this paper is not a full-fledged research paper, but it involves most of the skills required for one. You will need to find a reasonably large number of secondary sources, skim them well enough to identify whether they are useful for you, read some of them carefully, summarize their arguments and how they relate to one another, and identify the authors' current positions. You will also need to find several primary sources and discuss how they can be used to illuminate current research problems in the history of witchcraft. By the end of this project, you will have developed your ability to conduct historical research on any topic, and you will have the beginnings of a full-fledged research project on witchcraft if you decide to pursue that in the future.

Papers must be typed, double-spaced, with at least one-inch margins on all sides. (A 1.5 inch left margin would be nice, since it gives me and your peer editor more room to write comments). You must use *footnotes* to cite sources for any facts or interpretations that you take from reference works, unless they are common knowledge. Follow the style guidelines in Rampolla, *A pocket guide to writing in history*.

Please ask me if you have any questions about this assignment.