

## **Ten-page Paper Guidelines**

The ten-page paper allows you to do history, not just read and talk about it. You will explore a topic that interests you, find out what historians have written about it, and examine primary sources in order to make and support an argument about what the past was like.

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

- The topic should be focused enough to be manageable in ten pages. Iconoclasm in the Reformation, for instance, is too broad a topic to address in the allotted space. Iconoclasm and popular violence in the Dutch Reformation is more focused, but one could be even more focused than that.
- Your paper should not simply address a topic; it should answer a question. For instance: were iconoclastic crowds in the Netherlands in 1566 motivated by Reformation theology or anti-clerical rage?
- Finally, the paper should relate your specific question to a broader historical problem that it helps to illuminate—in our example, that might be the question of whether popular adherence to the Reformation was motivated by its theology or its attack on a Church that was widely seen as corrupt.

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.

## **Requirements**

1. You should think about a topic and sources during the first eight weeks of the course, through spring break. If you're drawing a blank, read ahead in Hale or look at some other book on the history of the late Renaissance and Reformation era.
2. By March 26 (the Tuesday after break), you must hand in a topic and list of sources. You must have at least 3 primary sources and 3 secondary sources. Your completed paper must use at least two of the sources in each category.
3. By April 9, you must hand in a narrative outline of the paper. (A handout will explain what a narrative outline is.) You will get the narrative outline back, with comments, the following week.
4. By April 23, you must hand in a first draft of the term paper. You will get the draft back, with comments, the following week.
5. The final draft of the paper is due May 7. Along with the final draft, you must turn in the original list of sources, the narrative outline, and the first draft. The final draft must be complete: that is, it must have a title page, a text with footnotes, and a bibliography.

These requirements are designed to encourage you to work on the paper throughout the semester. The draft that you hand in on April 23 should represent several weeks of work. You will then be able to revise your paper in relative leisure.

### **Grading**

The paper grade will combine process and product. About half of the grade will be based on the final product. The other half will be based on the process of research and revision that went into the paper. The *maximum* grade on this paper will be reduced by one-half letter grade for each late part of the assignment (topic and sources, outline, draft, and final draft). Each part must be handed in before I will accept the next part.

### **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 questions about how to format your paper that are not answered by Rampolla, *A pocket guide to writing in history*, you should consult Turabian.