

History Research Paper Project

Mentor: Pierce Salguero

Requirements:

This assignment asks you to research and write a 8-10 page research paper on the historical context for the primary source we have read this semester. You must purchase and read *Introducing Buddhism*, ISBN #9780415550017. Other sources to read and use for your paper will be provided.

Learning outcomes:

- Produce properly formatted bibliographies, annotated bibliographies, thesis statement, paper outline
- Analyze a primary source in its historical context
- Use sources to craft an historical argument

Paper Building Assignment #1: Preliminary Reading List. Deadline: _____

For the first project-building assignment, you should have a complete bibliography of the sources you will use, cited properly according to APA style. You should also immediately start acquiring the sources you have identified as pertinent to your research through the book store, the library catalogue, databases, interlibrary loan, and other means.

Paper Building Assignment #2: Annotated Bibliography. Deadline: _____

By now you should have read (or at least skimmed through) all of the materials on the reading list. For this assignment, please revise the document you created for PB#1. For each entry, provide an annotation. This is a 2-4 sentence comment that explains the main argument or summarizes the contents of the article or book.

Paper Building Assignment #3: Paper Prospectus. Deadline: _____

For this assignment, you will again revise the document you created for PB #1 and 2. Make any revisions to the bibliography that you need to. Now, add a a brief but detailed description of your paper topic. You may not know all of the results of your research yet, but share as much as you currently know. Aim for one solid paragraph, and under no circumstances go beyond a single page.

Paper Building Assignment #4: Paper Outline. Deadline: _____

Construct a single document that includes (in this order): A title, your revised prospectus, a detailed outline of your project, and your revised annotated bibliography. Your outline must include a separate Roman numeral for each major section, and under this, separate letters for each paragraph in each section. Each letter should be followed by the topic sentence of that paragraph. Then, briefly list your examples or subordinate points you will cover in this paragraph with individual Arabic numerals. Also mention images if you are including them. The more detailed your outline is, the better.

Paper Building Assignment #5: Full Rough Draft. Deadline: _____

A complete draft of your paper, with all of the writing finished and all citations in place. (Do not include your prospectus, annotated bibliography, or other preliminary work.) This will be my last chance to get feedback on this project, so put in your best possible effort.

Finalized Paper. Deadline: _____

Your final project should NOT include the annotated bibliography, prospectus, or outline. It must include the finalized bibliography as a list of references at the end of the paper. It also must have proper documentation of all the sources you used to research and write the project, using the APA style-sheet.

Grading Rubric for History Papers

These are the standards I adhere to when I grade term papers. The letter grade is awarded on the following criteria. Pluses and minuses are given for shades of difference in the project's conception, quality of writing or speech, attention to detail, and professional appearance.

A — Excellent in every way (this is not the same as perfect). This is an ambitious, perceptive project that grapples with interesting, complex ideas, and explores well-chosen evidence or examples revealingly. The discussion enhances the reader/viewer/listener's knowledge. It is something more than a summary, and doesn't simply repeat what has been taught or read. There is a context for all the ideas, and someone outside the class would be enriched, not confused, by it. It opens up, rather than flatly announces, its thesis or argument. The language is clean, precise, often elegant. The creator's stake in the project is obvious.

B — A project that reaches high and achieves many of its aims. The ideas are solid and progressively explored but some thin patches require more, and/or some stray thoughts don't fit in. The language is generally clear and precise but occasionally not. The evidence is relevant, but there may be too little. The context or the evidence may not be sufficiently explored so that I have to make some connections that the writer should have made clear for me.

Or... A project that reaches less high than A-level work, but thoroughly achieves its aims. This is a solid effort whose reasoning and argument may nonetheless be rather routine or conceptually limited.

C — A project that has real problems in one of these areas: conception (there's at least one main idea, but it's fuzzy and hard to get to); structure (confusing or simplistic organization); use of evidence (weak evidence for argument, the connections are not made among the ideas and the evidence, ideas and evidence are presented without context, or add up to platitudes and generalizations); language (word choices are often unclear; the sentences are often awkward, dependent on abstractions, sometimes contradict each other). The project does not move forward, but instead continually repeats its main points, or touches upon many apparently unrelated ideas without exploring any of them in sufficient depth. Punctuation, spelling, grammar, paragraphing, etc., may be problems.

Or... A project that is largely a summary without major problems.

Or... A project that is chiefly a personal reaction to something. Well written, but scant intellectual content, mostly opinion.

D — A project that is largely incoherent or is extremely problematic in many of the areas mentioned above: focus, aims, structure, use of evidence, language, etc.

F — A project that does not come close to addressing the expectations of the assignment.

(The above was abridged and adapted from Maxine Rodburg's grading rubric in Kerry Walk, *Commenting and Grading: A Guide for Preceptors*.)