



Seminar Research Paper Objective

Investigate a Constitutional history topic by framing a substantive research question, engaging in graduate-level scholarly research, contributing to new historical knowledge and thoughtfully presenting your findings to peers, your students, and/or public audiences. Your seminar paper will represent original research, involving not only analysis of primary sources but a command of relevant scholarly literature.

TOPIC - Due 3/7/12

Frame a research problem or question and briefly sketch out the sources you hope or plan to use.

PROSPECTUS - Due 3/12 (5%)

A prospectus is a fully-developed research plan that will help you pull together your research materials as you think about how to pursue your research question and develop your thesis. It describes your topic, introduces your working thesis, and explains the sources that you plan to use and pursue in building your argument. There's no magic number for sources, as it depends a great deal upon your topic, but I'll be looking for a balance of both primary and secondary sources.

Schedule of Project Due Dates	35%
Topic - due 2/27	0
Prospectus - due 3/12	5
Annotated Bibliography - due 3/26	10
Final Draft (12-15 pages) - due 4/23	15
Abstract - due 4/30	5

In a Prospectus, You Should....

- Introduce and describe your topic
- State what you already know about it
- State your primary research question
- Propose a tentative claim (that is, your working thesis, or possible answers to your primary research question)
- Outline the primary support (evidence + reasoning about the evidence in relationship to your claim) that you will use to develop your thesis
- Identify the sources containing that evidence and the disciplinary (or interdisciplinary) approaches those sources represent
- Indicate significant counter-arguments to your working thesis (or anomalous pieces of support that you will have to account for)
- Identify the sources that contain these counter-arguments/anomalies
- Explain why your insight into this topic is significant and interesting (how does your thesis pass the "so what?" test?)

Remember that your prospectus is a planning document; while it will provide the foundation for your finished paper, it is not intended to be the paper itself, or to state exactly what your paper will say (that is, it is not an abstract of an essay already written, but an *anticipation* of what will come based on the preliminary research you've done). You will discover as you do further research that you might need to make changes to your initial plan and to your working thesis (sometimes substantial ones).

Checklist for your prospectus

1. Summarize what you already know about the topic.
2. What is your proposed title?
3. Who is your intended audience?
4. What is the purpose of your paper; that is, what will this paper do for the reader? For you? Be specific.
5. What is your proposed thesis?
6. What major question(s) do you hope to answer in this paper that pertain to your purpose?
7. What is your proposed outline or organization (e.g., what will you discuss first, second, third, etc.)?
8. Tentatively, what sources will you be using? Cite those sources, and document them at the end of your prospectus on a Works Cited page (MLA) or as endnotes (Chicago Style)

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY - Due 3/26/12 (10%)

Each entry in the bibliography should contain the complete information for the source (see chart at right). For an explanation of what an annotated bibliography is and how to structure one, see the attached page, an excerpt from Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, 7e (Bedford, 2012).

You may ask, "how many sources should my bibliography contain"? There's no magic number, but you should consult both primary and secondary sources as needed to address your question.

FINAL DRAFT - Due 4/23/12 (15%)

Your final paper should be beautifully polished and represent your best effort. Length will be 12-15 double-spaced pages, plus bibliography or Works Cited. Number your pages. Provide a title page. Internal section divisions are fine, if it makes sense for your particular paper structure.

As you incorporate quotations from your sources, remember the following: quotations should be properly "framed" or introduced so the reader knows whose quote this is, and how it contributes to your argument. If a quotation is longer than 4 lines, set it off as a block quote. *Every* quotation needs a citation (parenthetical or footnote, depending on your chosen style). Format your citations in either Chicago Style or MLA, whichever you are more used to.

ABSTRACT - Due 4/30 (5%)

An abstract is a 200-300 word description of the main ideas, sources, and findings of your paper. The abstract will be published, along with the title of your paper and your name, on our course website in a virtual "gallery" of graduate research from this semester. Just like the abstracts in a scholarly journal – which are a permanent record – yours should contain keywords that would help a researcher trying to find your paper and be a reliable, neutral brief version of your overall argument.

Complete Bibliographic Information is
Author's Full Name
Full Title of the Work
City of Publication
Name of the Publisher
Date of Publication
The url if you accessed it online, enclosed in angle brackets < >

3b-2 Annotated bibliographies

When you start to study an unfamiliar topic or begin to work on a research paper, you will need to identify and evaluate the materials that will enable you to develop an understanding of the general topic and what other scholars have said about it, and form your own interpretations of the sources. In other words, you will need to generate a bibliography.

A *bibliography* is a list of books and articles on a specific topic; it may include both primary and secondary

sources. An *annotated bibliography* begins with the information included in a bibliography and then expands on it by including a brief summary of each book or article and assessing its value for the topic under discussion. An annotated bibliography, then, demonstrates your ability to gather, examine, and evaluate materials pertaining to a particular subject.

An annotated bibliography is an especially versatile and flexible assignment, so you should pay careful attention to the instructions provided by your professor. Regardless of the length or scope of the assignment, however, entries in an annotated bibliography generally follow a similar format. The entries should be arranged alphabetically by authors' last names. (See 7c-2 and 7c-3 for complete information about how to write bibliographic entries for a variety of sources.) Following the bibliographic information, you should include an *annotation*—a short paragraph in which you describe the content of the source and its usefulness for your topic. The following are some elements you might include in an annotation.

- A one-sentence description of what the book or article is about, including the author's thesis.
- A brief description of who the author is and what his or her credentials are.
- A brief description of the evidence the author uses to support his or her thesis.
- A concise evaluation of the author's use of sources and the validity of his or her argument.
- A brief description of the value of the book or article for your project.

Remember that entries in an annotated bibliography should be relatively short; you will not be able to write a full analysis of the book or article, as you would in a book review or critique (see 3d-1). Nevertheless, you should indicate the overall content of the source and its value for your project.

As noted above, each professor will have specific requirements for an annotated bibliography; the number of items, as well as the length of each entry, might vary dramatically from one instructor to the next, so it is important to follow your professor's instructions carefully. The following is one example of an annotated bibliography entry.

Fletcher, Richard. *The Cross and the Crescent: Christianity and Islam from Muhammad to the Reformation*. New York: Penguin/Viking, 2004.

This book examines the interactions, both positive and negative, between Christianity and Islam in the medieval and early modern periods. Fletcher, formerly a professor of medieval history at the University of York, England, argues that despite some productive interactions in the areas of trade and intellectual life, Christians and Muslims did not achieve any real measure of mutual understanding in the period under discussion. Rather, relations between the two cultures were marked by fear and hostility on the Christian side, and disdain and aloofness on the part of Muslims. Fletcher cites numerous examples to demonstrate that even in the most multicultural parts of the medieval world (Spain, Sicily, the Latin crusader states), Christians and Muslims "lived side by side, but did not blend" (p. 116). Although Fletcher's book is brief (161 pages), it is both scholarly and eminently readable, even for a non-specialist, and provides a clearly argued introduction to the subject that elucidates both Muslim and Christian viewpoints. Footnotes enable the student to pursue the sources the author used, and a narrative bibliography provides suggestions for further reading. The book also includes a useful chronology.

7c-2 Formatting guidelines for bibliographies

Your bibliography is a list of the books, articles, and other sources you used in preparing your paper. It must include all the works you cited in your notes; it may also include other works that you consulted but did not cite. However, avoid the temptation to pad your bibliography; list only materials you did in fact use.

Note: If your bibliography is long, you may wish to divide it into sections, such as "Primary Sources" and "Books and Articles." If you have used manuscripts or other unpublished sources, you might list these separately as well.

4. Typical bibliography entry

The following example illustrates the elements that should be included in a typical bibliography entry. Models for citing a variety of specific sources can be found in 7c-3.

Salmond, Anne. *Aphrodite's Island: The European Discovery of Tahiti*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009.

Bibliography entries are listed alphabetically by authors' last names; the first line of the entry begins at the far left, and subsequent lines are indented. Each author is listed last name first, followed by a comma and then the first name and initial(s) (if any). Periods separate the author's name, title of the work, and publication information. Individual entries should be single-spaced, with a double space between entries.

5. Multiple works by the same author

If your bibliography includes more than one work by the same author, use six unspaced hyphens followed by a period (-----) in place of the author's name in subsequent bibliography entries. List books by the same author alphabetically by title.

Salmond, Anne. *Aphrodite's Island: The European Discovery of Tahiti*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009.

----- *The Trial of the Cannibal Dog: The Remarkable Story of Captain Cook's Encounters in the South Seas*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003.