

## HIST 133D: RESEARCH PROJECT OPTION HANDOUT

As noted on the syllabus, students may propose to do a "no-essay-exam" research paper instead of the essay portion of the final exam. Those students must submit, on **Feb. 5** (week 5) with their journals, a proposal. Those students must discuss their topic ideas with me in advance, in office hours. In order to qualify, I must approve that proposal; I may limit the total number of such projects to keep things manageable.

- §1. **Proposal Format.** The purpose of the proposal is to find a suitable topic and resources to pursue it. It should have three main elements:
1. a *descriptive title* that indicates the main content and theme you are interested in.
  2. a *short description and explanation* of your topic, including an explicit list of a few questions that you hope the book will address.
  3. *full bibliographic information* on books, articles and web sites that you plan to use, including library call number, and for websites URL and site author (or hosting institution).
- §2. **Forming groups.** You may talk among yourselves and find other students with similar topics. I will facilitate the formation of groups if commonalities emerge.
- §3. **Proposal assessment.** The proposal will be marked  $\sqrt{-}$ ,  $\sqrt{}$ ,  $\sqrt{+}$  or  $+$ . Only the best submissions will qualify.
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- §4. **Due date & project elements.** By the end of week 8 (**Feb. 26**) each approved student/group should submit a draft version of their final project. Each draft project should include *most* of the following:
- a) a short "abstract": narrative introduction, thesis statement(s), and description of evidence;
  - b) annotated bibliography and annotated linkography;
  - d) in-depth reviews of some of the main resources used (books, articles, web sites, etc.);
  - e) embedded illustrations, with captions, including source attribution (URLs or books);
  - f) "about the author[s]" paragraph[s] with brief personal statement[s] and narrative about research process.
- §5. **Individual contributions in group projects.** If you do a group project, it should be clear who made or contributed to each part of the project. Sign a page you alone created, initial your linkography/bibliography annotations, sign "written by x and edited by y" for collaborative texts. 75% of the grade will be based on your contribution, 25% on the integration and overall quality.
- §6. **Content/Grading.** Research projects are worth the same as the essay portion of the exam, 20 points. When I grade, I look for five things. *First*, a *thesis statement* tells me the purpose of the project, what it is trying to elucidate, argue or explain. *Second*, I look for an *argument* supporting that thesis. *Third*, I look for concrete *evidence*—specific cases or examples—used to support the elements of the argument. Texts and annotations with any two of these three is a "C;" all three elements earn a "B." *Fourth*, I look *counterevidence* or *comparisons*—whether you assess the material relative to other works. If the first three elements are also present, this brings a contribution into the "A" range. *Finally*, I look to see whether the texts are *carefully written* and proofread, and have clear organization or perhaps even stylistic grace. This can lift a project up to a "+" or, with numerous typos and errors, drop it down to a "-."
- §7. **Bifurcation:** upon return of the graded research projects, students may either continue and submit a revised/corrected version, or opt to abandon the project and take the essay portion of the final exam.
- §8. **Web publication.** Selected research projects will also be uploaded to Gauchospace. They can be in word-processor format (.docx, .rtf) or in html. I will work with you to publish the projects on the web.
- §9. **Presentations.** The best projects may qualify to be presented to the class. We will have time during the final class meetings (or perhaps during a special evening session) to do this.
- §10. **Plagiarism**—presenting someone else's work as your own, or deliberately failing to credit or attribute the work of others on whom you draw (including materials found on the web)—is a serious academic offense, punishable by dismissal from the university. It hurts the one who commits it most of all, by cheating them out of an education. Offenses will be reported to the appropriate university authorities for disciplinary action.