Assignment: Partial Draft

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Geography 3985: Senior Project Seminar

Now that you have produced a polished statement of problem, an annotated bibliography, and a detailed outline, you are ready to write a first (partial) draft of your research paper, **due Wednesday, March 12, 2008, by 4:25 PM**. We do not have class that day, so please put your draft in my mailbox in 414 Social Sciences, or hand it to me if I am in my office (). What do I mean by partial? Well, write as complete a draft as possible so that your peers and I will have as much as possible to comment on after spring break. If there are sections that you don’t have enough information to write completely, then put place holders in your paper to indicate what you plan to fill in, and state what sources you will consult.

In completing the draft of your paper you will hone the skills that geographer George Demko (1992, 220) believes are necessary to become a geographer:

- the ability to articulate clearly in both speech and writing;
- the skills of observation, analysis, and logic;
- a deep, abiding curiosity.

Use your outline and Karl Nordstrom’s guidelines for writing term papers in geography courses to get started with the structure of your paper. Consult Kate Turabian’s *A Manual for Writers* for stylistic matters. Be certain within the first few paragraphs of your paper that you outline for the reader the topics that you will discuss, in the order that you will discuss them.

Your own voice should shine through in your prose and in the analysis of your topic. A paper that simply reports what others have said probably isn’t going to be very exciting. Set out to test a hypothesis or support a thesis or answer a research question.

If you’re having a hard time with a certain section of the paper, work on a different section. With your outline, you’ll be able to piece together and link the sections after you’ve written them. This approach really helps if the size of the project is overwhelming or writer’s block sets in.

A good paper will relate your research topic to themes in geography that you have learned in other classes or read on your own or heard from a visiting speaker. Think about answers to these questions: How does your work relate to topics that other geographers study? How is your approach similar? What subfield(s) of geography does your project best fit into? Nordstrom presents some other questions (see Fig. 1) to help you determine the geographical component of your topic.
Make sure that all sources—and only those sources—that are cited in your research paper are listed in your “References” page. Make sure to delete the annotations from your annotated bibliography if you are going to work from that file. Remember to be consistent in the style you use to cite your sources. Most geography students use Chicago style or Turabian style for their senior projects. Refer back to the handout for the annotated bibliography (available at the class website) for more details.

Put your working title at the top of your paper. Do not underline, italicize, or put quotation marks around your title!

Source Cited


Additional Guidelines for Partial Draft

Your partial draft does not have to contain text for every topic that you outlined. Do, however, include as much of the paper as possible. Remember to consult Nordstorm’s guidelines for structuring your paper. It is absolutely essential that you cite your sources for any facts and figures that you include in your partial draft. To repeat: You must include in-text citations for any direct quotes or paraphrased material. The references that you cite must be listed—with complete bibliographic information—in your References/Sources Cited page. A proof-read, spell-checked paper is easier to read, and your peers and I will appreciate your efforts to polish your draft, but you will not be graded on mechanics in this partial draft. I recommend that you focus on

CONTENT (for the topics you do include in your draft, if you are not able to cover all topics):

- Logical, concise introduction of your research topic (we’ll spend time working on the introduction after you’ve written your first complete draft so don’t agonize over it now)
- Clear statement of hypothesis/objectives/thesis statement/research questions (refer back to your statement of problem when formulating this section)
- Description near the end of the introduction of the topics that you will discuss in the paper (in the order that you will discuss them) so that the reader knows how you will test your hypothesis/address your objectives/support your thesis statement/answer your research questions
- Logical development of ideas throughout the paper (or at least in the sections that you have completed, with placeholders so the reader knows what details you plan to fill in)
- Thorough yet concise discussion of all aspects that you outlined in your introduction (or placeholders for the sections that you haven’t yet completed)
- Clear sense throughout your paper of how your study is geographical
• Tentative conclusions, which you will modify and strengthen as you complete your research

CITATIONS

• Proper notation of in-text citations, including electronic sources and personal interviews
• In-text citations wherever needed (wherever you have paraphrased or quoted material from outside sources)
• Bibliography (title for this page: References) in the Turabian format discussed in the annotated bibliography handout and in Chapters 18 and 19 of Turabian’s A Manual for Writers; no matter what style you use, **you must be consistent with the citation format**!
• List of references in alphabetical order but not numbered
• Adequate sources cited to support your arguments throughout the paper