History 3102: Early Modern Europe to 1750

This page contains the following resources for your research paper (click on the links below to access the information, or scroll through the page to review everything):

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- Topic Statement and Preliminary Bibliography assignment
- Useful library resources
- Information on Periodicals: Popular or Scholarly?

General Instructions

Topic Statement and Bibliography Assignment

Due: MONDAY FEBRUARY 19

The goal of this assignment is to get you settled on a topic for your long paper as early in the process as possible. It's difficult to reap the benefits of completing a project in stages - outline, draft, revision, final version - if at the point when you're supposed to be writing a complete rough draft, you're still not sure what you want to write on or what sources are available to you. Therefore the point of this assignment is that you formulate a topic that interests you and which is feasible based on the resources available to you (as demonstrated by including a bibliography).

Topic Statement

For this assignment you must turn in a paragraph between one-half a page and one page in length (125-250 words) describing the topic on which you plan to write your long paper. This paragraph must include the following information:

- what do you plan to write about? - not just a subject (for instance, the Renaissance), but what aspects of the subject do you want to focus on in your paper? (for instance, the role of the artist in the Renaissance; diplomatic relations between city-states in the Renaissance; attitudes towards women in the Renaissance; etc.) At this point, your topic will be relatively vague, but start to think about what question do you hope to answer about your subject? The sooner you start to narrow down your topic, the better!

- what sources will you use to do this? (you will provide details in your bibliography, but by summing up the sources in a sentence or so in your topic statement, you will show that you know something about the nature of the sources available)
Bibliography

Please divide your bibliography into two sections: Primary Sources and Secondary Sources (these may both be listed on the same page). As a general guideline, you must include at least 3 primary sources and 5 secondary sources. However, this guideline is deceptively simple; for instance, if you wanted to write on some aspect of the history of early modern drama, and chose to use plays by Shakespeare as a primary source, all three of your sources (if you used 3 different play) might appear in the same book; therefore your primary source bibliography would consist of one book. I encourage you to create as comprehensive a bibliography as you can. You are at a very preliminary stage in your project; I would like to see you collect as many resources available to you as possible. It is understood that you will not read every word of every book you list on your bibliography; some books you may find yourself not using at all, in the end, and therefore you will omit them from the final version of your bibliography.

Format

The best way to format your bibliography properly is to find a copy of Kate Turabian, A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations (there is a copy in the reference section of Briggs library, call number REF COLL LB2369.T8 1996). This book explains what information to provide in a bibliography and how to format it. If you cannot get access to Turabian, below I list some examples of how to cite the most commonly encountered forms of publications which you might need to include in your bibliography.

Format

Below are examples of how to cite a number of different kinds of sources in a bibliography. Though I would prefer you to follow the format below (also known as the "Chicago" style), it is much more important that you are consistent in whatever format you do follow. You must include the following information: author's name; book/article/etc. title; title of journal or book of essays (if your source is not a complete book); place of publication, publisher, and date of publication; page numbers (if your source is not a complete volume - that is, a journal article or an essay in a book of collected essays); names of editor or translator (if your source has these).

Book, one author:

Book, more than one author:

Translated book, one author:
Edited book of essays:

Essay found in edited book of essays:

Journal article:

Anonymous primary source, with modern editor:


**Library Resources**

Briggs Library's Guide to Starting Points for Internet Research is a useful starting point if you would like to identify resources on the internet. The database Historical Abstracts will help you identify scholarly articles on your subject. To access, go to Briggs Library's listing of databases and choose Historical Abstracts. Matt Conner of Briggs Library has also compiled a specialized guide to research for this class.

**Information on Periodicals: Popular or Scholarly?**

There are several types of periodical publications found in research library collections. Knowing something about the characteristics of each type - popular, scholarly or trade - will help you identify periodical titles appropriate to the type of writing you are looking for. **For this class, you will be best advised to use material from scholarly periodicals (journals) only.** (I've included the information on the other kinds of periodicals for comparison's sake.) Magazines and trade publications are extremely valuable for certain kinds of research, especially anything examining current affairs, but for a paper discussing an aspect of European history between 1350 and 1750,
they will not be able to provide the resources you need. **Popular Periodicals** (also referred to as Magazines)

- Tend to have short articles (1-5 pages).
- Cover a variety of topic/subject areas (*Time, The New Yorker, National Review*). Conversely, they may cover a single subject area-*Sports Illustrated* or *Audubon* are good examples-with the intention of informing or entertaining the readership.
- Have articles that do not contain a bibliography or cited reference page. The reader cannot check the author's information by tracking down and reading the original information source.
- Are intended for a non-academic, non-specialized audience.
- Use conventional/conversational language, as opposed to a specialized vocabulary.
- Contain articles written by journalists, rather than researchers or specialists in a given field.
- Contain articles often accompanied by photographs or other illustrations.
- Are issued frequently (i.e., come out weekly, biweekly or monthly).

**Scholarly Periodicals** (also referred to as Journals)

- Often contain lengthy articles (five to fifty pages).
- Generally confine the subject matter to a single, very specific aspect of a subject area (e.g., music theory, European political science, film studies, language development).
- Contain articles with footnotes or cited reference pages. The cited references allow the reader to consult the same material that the author used in his/her research.
- Are intended for an academic or scholarly audience.
- Use technical or specialized vocabulary.
- Publish articles written by academics, specialists or researchers in the field (as opposed to articles written by journalists reporting on or synthesizing research).
- Often publish reviews of the literature.
- Often include articles with charts or tables: news photos and other types of graphics are not often used, save in the case of articles on visual subjects, such as art, design or architecture.
- Are often produced under the editorial supervision of a professional association (e.g., *Journal of the American Medical Association*) or by a scholarly press (e.g., Elsevier, Pergamon).
- Contain little or no advertising.
- Are issued less frequently than magazines (i.e., two to twelve times per year).

**Trade Publications** (also called Professional Publications)
• Geared towards very specific audiences, usually managers or administrators in business, finance, and industry.
• Issued weekly or monthly to take advantage of fast-breaking changes in products or technology.
• Contain regular columns of news and commentary, as well as lengthier articles about current issues and trends of interest to people in the field.
• May be written by specialists or journalists. Examples of better known trade publications include *Beverage Industry*, *Adweek*, and *Food Processing*.

**Grey Areas**

There are always grey areas with respect to pinning down what is popular or scholarly. Titles like *Harpers*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *Parabola*, and *Science* contain sophisticated writing, footnoted articles, and authors that hold advanced degrees. At the same time, they display advertisements, have regular columns, photos, and brief articles, and are published by large media conglomerates. If you are concerned about whether the article you want to use falls within a particular category, look for a bibliography, or lack of one, at the end of the article. Also, look for a brief biography of the author, either at the beginning of the article, or at the end of the publication, for information about the author's education and/or institutional affiliation. Most scholarly publications will identify the department and college, university or research lab where the author works. If you still have questions about what type of publication you have selected, after identifying these distinguishing features, talk with a reference librarian or your instructor. This handout adapted from a publication of Wilson Library at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, which may be found on the web at