

Research Paper

You have now had several opportunities to explore a focused topic using primary source documents. You'll do the same thing on a slightly larger scale for your research paper, which will be an essay 5 pages long, based on a collection of primary sources. Choose a title from the list below. Each one is a "Brief History with Documents" book on reserve at the college library. Each book contains an overview to the topic written by a historian, and then a collection of primary sources within which you can conduct research. Develop a question for investigation within the book's documents. Each book has "Study Questions" at the end, if you need help getting started formulating a question. It shouldn't be just a question of fact ("What happened?") but of interpretation ("How? Why? What did it mean?"). You should use and quote from primary sources from the book to answer your question.

Schedule

Books are now on reserve at the library's circulation desk
 Rough draft due in class for peer review Wed, 14 October
 Essay due Wed, 21 October in class in hard copy. No email submissions.
 The paper is worth 10% of your final grade.

As I read your essay I will be looking for:

- High-quality analysis of primary source evidence.
- Clear and thoughtful writing free of grammatical and spelling errors.
- A core argument that is clearly stated in the introduction, carried throughout the paper, and that comes to a logical end in the conclusion.
- Historical accuracy and attention to detail, including complete & correct citations.
- Independent work and thought, not just rehashing someone else's argument, but developing your own original historical interpretation.

Mechanics:

- Length = 5 double-spaced pages, plus references.
- Paper should have a good title that indicates what the paper is about.
- Pages should be numbered.
- References can be in either MLA (parenthetical citation) or Chicago Style (footnotes).
- Proofread your paper carefully. No sloppy work. Please seek help from the Writing Center or from me, well in advance!

Bedford Brief History w/ Documents Series

The Rebuilding of Old Commonwealths: Social Reform in the Progressive Era South, edited by William A. Link

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