

Research Paper

Draft due for peer review: Monday, April 5 Final Paper Due: Friday, April 9

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 a well-researched essay 5 pages long. Choose a PRIMARY document from the Chafe book, *A History of Our Time: Readings on Postwar America*. Remember that the book also contains some secondary source essays (for example, Bruce Schulman, "Lyndon B. Johnson and American Liberalism" - those would NOT be appropriate for this assignment).^{*} Next, narrow down a historical question that you'll answer in your paper. Use one of the discussion questions in Chafe's introduction to the chosen primary document as your starting point (or come up with a relevant and focused question yourself – it should be one which the document can actually help you answer). Then, conducting your own independent research, find a second primary source document that also helps you answer the question = a "supporting document." Your second primary source needs to be reliable and substantive. It also doesn't have to agree with your first document; "supporting" can mean "arguing with." Examples could include a document, photograph, newspaper or magazine article from the time period of the event, or audio/video recording. Although it could be something published or reproduced online, your second source cannot be a website or a Wikipedia entry. Your paper will then use your two primary sources as evidence to answer your chosen question. You can use, cite, or refer to secondary sources if you need to, but the bulk of the paper should be spent in discussing, comparing, and drawing historical evidence from the 2 primary sources.

By Monday, April 5, you'll have a draft of your paper and we'll have a peer review day in class.

Your final paper is due Friday, April 10 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/question 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.

^{*} Or you can use a PRIMARY SOURCE that was assigned for a class reading, such as Ruth Alexander's "What Price the Fatted Calf?" If you have any questions about whether something is a primary or secondary source, run it by me first.

Mechanics:

- Length = 4 to 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). Use your copy of Diana Hacker, *A Writer's Reference*, or her online site, for guidance on how to do this correctly. The Writing Center can also help you. Please do not ask me for citation formatting help by email the night before it is due.
- Proofread your paper carefully. No sloppy work. Spellcheck, and use complete sentences.
- If writing is a challenge for you, PLEASE use the Writing Center well ahead of the deadline and/or come see me during office hours.