HISTORY 450: The Writing of History
Spring Semester 2015
T TH 12:30-1:45, AL 524

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Goals and Format of the Course:

History 450 is the capstone course for the major in history at San Diego State University. The primary goal of this course is to complete a 20-page primary-source-based research paper on a topic in San Diego history during the nineteenth, twentieth, and/or twenty-first centuries. There are a number of "byproducts" of writing this paper, which are also course goals. They include:

• learning to exploit the library and archival resources, both digital and paper, available to students in the San Diego area,
• locating appropriate reference materials
• meeting local librarians and archivists who will provide suggestions for your topic
• delineating a realistic and significant research problem
• constructing a thesis and with a consistent and plausible argument
• being able to place your thesis and your research historiographically
• improving writing skills to be able to write in a clear and articulate manner
• editing your own and each other’s work
• using and deciphering information from primary source material in such a way that you will be constructing an argument that is important and provides new insights into the history of San Diego

We will read two books and several articles pertaining to San Diego history over the first few weeks of the semester. In each reading, we will pay special attention to the themes and questions presented by historians of San Diego, the primary sources they use and how they use them, and the ways that these historians used this evidence to build an argument. We will also read research guides to historical writing and the use of historical evidence that will serve to outline the steps and techniques necessary for writing a research paper. During this time, we will become familiar with local archival collections and secondary-source holdings of Love Library. By the end of these weeks, you will be expected to have a clearly delineated research topic. After that, we will meet periodically as a group to discuss research progress and work that has been assigned along the way (bibliography, outline, proposal, short papers, etc.) During the weeks we do not meet as a group, we will have 10-15-minute individual meetings scheduled through a sign-up sheet that I will hand around in class.

One final note: This probably will be one of the most challenging courses you will take at SDSU. Although I am fully committed to supporting your efforts and helping you throughout the research and writing process, keep in mind that your success in this course depends largely upon your own initiative. I suggest that you meet with me regularly, and that you get started as soon as possible in the research process (choosing and defining a topic, conducting preliminary research, etc).

Course Requirements and Grading:

1. Attendance: You need to come to every class. Important: Because of the format of this course, attendance is especially crucial. Therefore, attendance is required and unexcused absences will severely affect your participation grade.

2. Participation (10%): Participation is a key part of this course, and it includes two components: verbal participation in class and turning in discussion papers based on the first five weeks of reading in the course. Your grade for participation is based on your performance for each of these components.

Verbal Participation:
Be aware that participation does not simply mean showing up for class. I will assume that you will be at every class meeting, and that you will come prepared. Being prepared and receiving full points for verbal participation means that you must do the following:
• that you do not come late to class
that you are alert and paying attention throughout the entire class period
that you listen attentively to your colleagues’ presentations and offer helpful suggestions
that you prepare adequately for class presentations
that you have done the reading(s) we are to discuss and bring them to class
that you are prepared to participate in class discussion
that you add meaningful and knowledgeable comments to class discussion.

More general behavior guidelines are listed in the California Code of Regulations, Section 4101, included in the San Diego State University General Catalogue. Also take into account that I will call on you at random to answer questions in class. This means that you need to be prepared at all times. Verbal participation also means diligence and regular communication with me during the weeks that we do not meet formally. The degree to which you fulfill these requirements will determine this component of your participation grade.

Discussion papers:
For the first four weeks of class, you will be required to answer questions on each week’s readings and hand them in to me. The questions are located in the syllabus on the page entitled “Reading Questions for History 450.” The answers to these questions must be typed and double-spaced. There is no page minimum or limit, but answers that are well thought out will probably be between 2 or 3 double-spaced pages. As state in the syllabus, these papers will be graded with a plus (+) for full credit or a check for partial (1/2) credit depending on the quality and thoughtfulness of your answers. I will grade on both grammar and content, and I will not accept hastily written answers, answers with excessive grammatical errors, or answers that have been copied or paraphrased from the reading. These answers will take thought and care, and I want to see them written in your own words. If you receive full credit on every paper, you will receive full credit for the discussion paper component of the participation grade.

3. Presentation of primary and secondary source (5%), February 17: For this assignment, you will locate one primary and one secondary source that are pertinent to your research topic and prepare to present them to the class. In your 3-4-minute presentation, you should first describe each source to the class – where it comes from and what it contains – and how you will use it in your paper. What kind of information do you find useful in each source? How will these sources help you to build your argument?

4. Paper proposal and bibliography (10%), due February 26 at 12:30pm: Before you start your research project, you will turn in a 2-3-page proposal and preliminary bibliography. The bibliography needs to list at least 10 secondary and 10 primary sources (be sure to separate them into two separate lists). Be aware that these are sources that will get you started in your research and may or may not appear in your final bibliography. More detailed description of the requirements of this assignment can be found in the “Description of Written Assignments.”

5. Written evaluation of previous 450 papers (5%), due March 3 at 12:30pm: For this assignment, you will read two 450 papers from previous semesters and fill out the worksheet included at the back of the syllabus (though you may type your answers if you wish).

6. Paper outline and thesis statement (5%), due March 24 at 12:30pm: You will need to turn in a detailed outline of the paper as well as a statement of the paper’s overall argument. You must have both components of this assignment (thesis and outline) in order to receive full credit. The outline must be a sentence outline, meaning that each topic heading must be a sentence, not simply a word or phrase. I will expect the outline to be between 3 and 5 pages long. Keep in mind, however, that both thesis and outline will still be preliminary and may very well change as you write the paper. More detailed description of the requirements of this assignment can be found in the “Description of Written Assignments.”

7. Introduction to paper (10%), due April 7 at 12:30pm: Approximately 3 weeks before the paper is due, you will be expected to write and turn in the introduction to the paper. In order to receive credit, the introduction has to be at least 3 pages. More detailed description of the requirements of this assignment can be found in the “Description of Written Assignments.”

8. One 3-4-page Primary Source Paper (10%), due April 14 at 12:30pm: In this paper, you will write a 3-4-page section of your paper whose argument will be based on a primary source or variety of primary sources. More detailed description of the requirements of this assignment can be found in the “Description of Written Assignments.”

9. First draft of paper (20%), due April 28 at 12:30pm: First drafts of at least 20 pages are to be turned in at this time so that you will have enough time to make necessary revisions. Although these drafts are usually called “rough” drafts, in this case yours must be as complete as possible.
and represent your very best effort – as you can see, it represents a substantial portion of your grade. Similarly, a “rough” draft does not mean that typographical and grammatical errors are permissible. On the contrary, they are not, and if there are too many errors or careless mistakes in the draft, I will hand it back to you without grading it. It might help to think of the paper as a final draft that you can still improve upon. The paper’s grade will be based on: selection and use of primary sources, structure and development of an argument, and writing style. I will grade the drafts and turn them back to you within a week.

10. Oral Presentations (5%): During the last week of class and our final exam meeting period, you will make a 6-8-minute oral presentation on your findings. Both the content and format of the presentation will be taken into consideration for grading purposes. Visual aids are highly encouraged.

11. Final draft of paper (20%), due May 14 at 10:30am: The final draft of at least 20 pages will be graded on a similar set of criteria as the first draft, but I will pay closest attention to the revisions you have done and the overall improvement of the paper. If you do not revise the paper in any way, you will receive a 0 on the final draft, so pay close attention to my comments and implement any changes I suggest and any improvements that you think of as well.

Note: You must turn in the rough draft – the original, with my comments on it – with the final copy of the paper.

Note: Assignments are normally to be turned at the beginning of class time. If we are not meeting that week, however, you are to turn them in to my office (AL 534). I will not accept late assignments. If you have extenuating circumstances, you must notify me ahead of time.

Books, Readings, and Resources:
The following books are required reading and are available at KB Books or in the Aztec bookstore. If you run into problems with availability, please let me know. You can also get them on www.amazon.com, oftentimes at a discount.


For citations – bibliography and footnotes – you will need to follow the “Chicago Style” set forth in Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, 8th Edition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014, though any edition is fine). This book is available in the reference section of Love Library, though it is probably more convenient to check the history department’s web page at history.sdsu.edu and click on “Writing Guides” or go directly to http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc5e/ to find out how to do Chicago Style citations.

The other readings are all available on-line at the website for the San Diego Historical Society, www.sandiegohistory.org. This website will be a vital resource for you in your research, so be sure to familiarize yourself with it right away. The web addresses for the online book and articles are provided here and on Blackboard so that you can print them out or read them online.


• Mary Allely, “Local History Materials in the California Room of the San Diego Public Library” *Journal of San Diego History* Summer 1991, Volume 37, Number 3.  [http://www.sandiegohistory.org/journal/91summer/library.htm](http://www.sandiegohistory.org/journal/91summer/library.htm)


There are several reference articles and websites that are designed to help you locate and use archival sources in the area, listed as follows.


• The web page [http://sandiegohistory.org/journal/repositories.htm](http://sandiegohistory.org/journal/repositories.htm) has links to excellent descriptions of holdings in local archives (some of which are included in Week 4’s readings), including the special collections at SDSU and UCSD, the San Diego Maritime Museum, the California Room of the San Diego Public Library, and the Pacific Northwest National Archives.
Course Schedule:

Week 1: Course Introduction

Thursday, 1/22
- Introduction to the course

Week 2: San Diego History

Tuesday, 1/27
- Discussion of readings
- Turn in discussion paper for Week 2 readings
- BRING BOOK AND ARTICLES (OR LAPTOP) WITH YOU

Readings:

Thursday, 1/29
- Discussion of findings from assignment
- Orientation to research in the PAC, Circuit, Interlibrary Loan, WorldCat and article databases
- Group research activity and worksheet
- If you have a laptop, please bring it to class today.

Assignment: Before class on Thursday, take an hour or so to explore the San Diego Historical Society website at [http://sandiegohistory.org](http://sandiegohistory.org). Look at the kinds of resources it offers and the archive’s document collections. Consult the list it provides of other local archives, libraries and historical societies. Choose an archive or library that interests you and that also has a website and explore that website as well.

Week 3: Historical Research Methods – Topics, Arguments, and Use of Evidence

Tuesday, 2/3
- Discussion of *Craft of Research* reading
- Work on narrowing the topics you have chosen
- Turn in discussion paper for Week 3a readings
- BRING BOOK WITH YOU


Thursday, 2/5
- Discussion of *Craft of Research* reading
- Work on evidence and how to construct an argument from primary source materials
- Turn in discussion paper for Week 3b readings
- BRING BOOK AND ARTICLE (OR LAPTOP) WITH YOU
Michael E. Dillinger. “Hillcrest: From Haven to Home” *Journal of San Diego History*

**Week 4: Historical Sources and Local Archival Collections**

**Tuesday, 2/10**
- Discuss historical research methodology and historical sources as outlined in *Going to the Sources*
- Discuss local public records and local archives as described in articles
- Turn in discussion paper for Week 4 readings
- **BRING BOOK AND ARTICLES (OR LAPTOP) WITH YOU**

Readings: Brundage, Anthony. *Going to the Sources: A Guide to Historical Research and Writing*, Chapters 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6 (everything except Chapter 4).

**Thursday, 2/12**
- Orientation to SDSU’s Special Collections. Special Collections is located on the 4th Floor of the Library Addition to Love Library. We will meet there instead of our usual classroom at 12:30.

**Week 5: Applying What You’ve Learned: Finding Primary and Secondary Sources**

**Tuesday, 2/17**
- Presentation of primary and secondary sources
- Explanation of how to write a proposal and complete a bibliography in Chicago Style format

**Assignment:** Using the research tools you have learned for finding primary and secondary sources, locate one of each and prepare to present them to the class. In your 3-4-minute presentation, you should first describe each source to the class – where it comes from and what it contains – and how you will use it in your paper. What kind of information do you find useful in each source? How will these sources help you to build your argument?

**Thursday, 2/19**
No class meeting– individual meetings during class time.

**Week 6, 2/24 and 2/26: Proposal and Bibliography Due**

No class meeting for the week– individual meetings during class time and pursue individual research.

- **Turn in proposal and bibliography to my office by 12:30p.m. on Thursday, 2/26.**

**Assignment:** On Thursday, 2/26 turn in a 2-3-page proposal for your paper and a preliminary bibliographical list (at least 10 secondary sources and 10 primary sources, listed separately). Read over the instructions for doing this assignment that are provided in the syllabus.
Week 7: Evaluating Previous 450 Papers

Tuesday, 3/3
- Discuss previous 450 papers
- Turn in worksheet on the papers

Assignment: Read two papers written by former History 450 students (they are available on Blackboard). Fill out the worksheet in your syllabus in order to help guide your reading and to aid in preparing your comments for class.

Thursday, 3/5
No class meeting—individual meetings during class time and pursue individual research and writing.

Week 8, 3/10 and 3/12: Individual Research

No class meeting this week — individual meetings during class time and pursue individual research and writing.

Week 9, 3/17 and 3/19: Individual Research

Tuesday, 3/17
- Explanation of how to write outlines and thesis statements

Thursday, 3/19
No class meeting—individual meetings during class time and pursue individual research and writing.

Week 10, 3/24 and 3/26: Outline and Thesis Statement Due

Tuesday, 3/24
- Discussion of outlines, theses, progress on research and writing
- Explanation of how to write an introduction.

Assignment: Turn in outline of paper and thesis statement. Read over the instructions for doing this assignment that are provided in the syllabus.

Thursday, 3/26
No class meeting—individual meetings during class time and pursue individual research and writing.

Spring Break!

Week 11: Introductions Due

Tuesday, 4/7
- Discussion of introductions, and any problems or questions you might have.
- Discussion of *The Craft of Research* on drafting and revising research papers.
- Explanation of how to write Primary Source Paper.


Assignment: Turn in Introduction to your paper (no less than 3 pages). Read over the instructions for doing this assignment that are provided in the syllabus.
Thursday, 4/9  
No class meeting – individual meetings during class time and pursue individual research and writing.

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Week 12: Primary Source Papers Due  

Tuesday, 4/14  
- Discussion of Primary Source Papers.  
- Discussion of expectations for rough draft and suggestions for how to go about writing draft.

Assignment: Turn in Primary Source Paper. Read over the instructions for doing this assignment that are provided in the syllabus.

Thursday, 4/16  
No class meeting – individual meetings and pursue individual research and writing.

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Week 13, 4/21 and 4/23: Individual Research  
No class meeting – individual meetings and pursue individual research and writing.

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Week 14: First Drafts Due and Individual Meetings  

Tuesday, 4/28  
No class meeting – turn in rough drafts. I will be available for individual consultation in my office (AL 534) during class time.

Assignment: ROUGH DRAFTS DUE TUESDAY, APRIL 28 AT 12:30PM

Thursday, 4/30  
No class meeting – individual meetings and pursue individual research and revisions.

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Week 15: Revision of Drafts and Oral Presentations  

Tuesday, 5/5  
- Rough drafts handed back  
- Discussion of rough drafts and expectations for final drafts  
- Oral Presentations of papers

Thursday, 5/7  
No class meeting – individual meetings and pursue individual research and revisions

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Final Exam Week: Oral Presentations  

Thursday, 5/14, 10:30am-12:30pm  
- Oral presentations of papers  
- Turn in Final Draft of Paper

Assignment: FINAL PAPERS DUE THURSDAY, MAY 14 AT 10:30am  
Note: Turn in rough draft with final copy.
History 450 – Description of Written Assignments

The following is a description of the assignments you will turn in throughout the semester prior to writing your final paper. Keep in mind that all assignments must be typed and double-spaced, and will be graded on grammar and style as well as organization and content. Bibliographic entries and footnotes must follow the Chicago Style as described in the syllabus. If you have further questions about these assignments, do not hesitate to contact me.

**Paper proposal and bibliography (10%)**: This assignment consists of two parts: a 2-3 page proposal and a bibliography. The proposal should be written in the form of an essay and should include the following information. **First**, you need to introduce your topic. Begin broadly, describing the wider context of the topic. Then you will narrow down to the specific subject(s) that you will discuss in the paper – identify the subject, the place, and the time period. Most importantly, conclude this section of your proposal by stating what your major research question is, and the tentative hypothesis. **Next**, you need to describe the significance of your topic and your hypothesis. This aspect of your proposal requires that you discuss what other authors have written that is related to your topic. What are their conclusions? How are your conclusions different from theirs? What new information or new perspective does your work bring to the field? **Finally**, you will describe the “methodology” you will employ in your research. Methodology, or the methods you will use to write your paper, includes two aspects: the sources you will use and the questions you will ask of those sources in order to investigate the validity of your hypothesis.

The bibliography needs to list at least 10 secondary and 10 primary sources, and be sure to list them separately, under separate headings. Be aware that these are sources that will get you started in your research and may or may not appear in your final bibliography. Primary sources should be specific – do not simply cite the name of a newspaper or magazine, but rather the specific article(s) you will use. Internet sources are only acceptable if they contain primary sources and if they come from an academic or government website.

**Paper outline and thesis statement (5%)**: This assignment consists of two components: a detailed outline of your paper and a specific thesis statement. You must have both components of this assignment (thesis and outline) in order to receive full credit. Keep in mind that both thesis and outline will still be preliminary and may very well change as you write the paper. The outline must be a detailed sentence outline, meaning that each topic heading must be a sentence, not simply a word or phrase. I will expect the outline to be between 3 and 5 pages long. Refer to *The Craft of Research* for help with turning a topic outline into a “point” outline, but be aware that you must take one more step in turning the “points” into full sentences. Your thesis statement, in which you describe your paper’s main claim and the way you will prove it, should be related to your original hypothesis, but by now it should be more complex. The thesis may be more than one sentence long, and should reflect the research you have done. In other words, the research you have been doing has served to test your hypothesis. Your thesis statement should reflect conclusions you have drawn from the research, so that your hypothesis has now turned into an argument.

**Introduction to paper (10%)**: Approximately one month before the paper is due, you will be expected to write and turn in the introduction to the paper. In order to receive credit, the introduction it has to be at least 3 pages. As with all introductions, it should begin with background context, lead into your specific topic, tell why that topic is important, and conclude by
stating your thesis (your main claim) and the points (sub-claims) you will make in order to prove it.

Reread The Craft of Research chapter on writing introductions before you begin writing.

3-4-page Primary Source Paper (10%): For this paper, choose one (or more) of your primary sources and use it to write a 3-4-page section of your larger paper. There are two purposes for writing this paper: first, it will give you practice in working with primary sources, and second, the idea is that it will be incorporated (with some revision) into your final paper. This paper will use the primary source(s) selected in order to support a specific argument, or claim; you will be using evidence from your source(s) to prove that claim, which will ideally be a sub-claim of the larger argument you will be making in your completed draft. The Primary Source Paper must not be a description of the source(s) but rather must use it as evidence to support its claim. Any describing of the source(s) that you do must serve a particular purpose in the paper (in supporting the argument). You are not writing this paper, in other words, to let someone know what information your source provides; rather, you are writing it in order to prove a claim you are making, and you are using that source in order to do so. Simple descriptions will be handed back to you for revision.

In order to write the paper, therefore, you need to have a specific claim, or argument, in mind. This should be the argument you stated in your Introduction, though this paper may address only one aspect of it. **First,** begin your paper as you did the proposal, by giving background context to the source and then identifying the source – where it comes from, when it was produced, etc. Then state your claim and how the source is going to prove that claim. **Next,** the heart of the paper will consist of the evidence you use to prove the claim. The different paragraphs in this section will make up your “sub-claims”: they must begin with a topic sentence that relates to the paper’s main claim, and will then go into the specific evidence gathered from the source that supports the sub-claim. **Finally,** conclude the paper by reiterating the claim you have proven and how it related to the larger argument of your topic (i.e., your final paper). If you find this confusing, refer to Section III of The Craft of Research and/or talk to me about it.

*Note on Citations and Quoting: In order to be a responsible researcher, you always need to identify the sources of your information. This does not mean, however, that when you use information or ideas presented by other authors, that you necessarily have to quote from them. Ideally, you will only quote from primary sources in your paper. When using information from secondary sources, summarize the information in your own words, tailored to the needs of your own paper, and then include a footnote indicating where you find this information. Trust your own words and your own understanding of the material. When using primary sources, however, quotes can be very useful to illustrate points. But be careful in your use of quotes. Limit quotes to several lines at the most, and indent and single-space any quote that is longer than three lines. Most importantly, do not use quotes to make your points for you. You need to make your own points, and then use quotes to illustrate them. In this way, you must first make a point, then introduce the quote (who said it, when, and perhaps where). Make sure the quote flows smoothly from your introduction, in a way that is grammatically correct. After stating the quote, furthermore, be sure to conclude with a sentence in which you reiterate what the quote was supposed to illustrate. Refer to The Craft of Research, Section 12.4 and the “Quick Tip: Using Quotation and Paraphrase” for an excellent description of plagiarism, citations, and quotations.
Reading Questions for History 450

Questions for Week 2, due Tuesday, January 27: San Diego History

For San Diego: Where California Began
1. Briefly identify the main periods of San Diego history? Which period(s) interest you the most and why?

For “The Need for Water”
2. What is the article about? What is(are) the author’s main argument(s)?
3. Give 3 examples of primary sources that the author used and 3 examples of secondary sources. Be sure to include full citations.

For “From Grecian Columns to Spanish Towers”
4. What is the article about? What is(are) the author’s main argument(s)?
5. Give 3 examples of primary sources that the author used and 3 examples of secondary sources. Be sure to include full citations.

Questions for Week 3a, due Tuesday, February 3: Historical Research Methods

For The Craft of Research
1. What are the main steps of writing a research paper?
2. What is the difference between a “topic” and a “problem?” How can you turn a topic into a problem? Why is a problem, in this case, a good thing?
3. Why are you writing this research paper? What kinds of problems are you trying to solve? Are they practice problems or theoretical, intellectual problems? Why is it worth trying to solve them?

Questions for Week 3b, due Thursday, February 5: Using Historical Evidence

For The Craft of Research:
1. Define the following words based on the reading: claim, reason, evidence.
2. What information is supposed to be footnoted? What is the purpose of a footnote/citation?
3. When is it appropriate to use quotations? What is the purpose of a quotation?

For “Hillcrest: From Haven to Home”
4. What is the main argument of the article? What is the author’s purpose in writing the article?
5. Give one example of a primary source that the author used and explain how he used the evidence from that source to support his argument.

Questions for Week 4, due Tuesday, February 10: Historical Sources and Local Archival Collections

For Going to the Sources:
1. What is a source? What is the difference between a primary and secondary source?
2. In what way is history “open-ended?” How has the writing of history changed over the last two centuries?

For “Local Public Records and San Diego History”
3. Identify and briefly describe 3 different sources found in this archive that you found the most interesting. What kinds of research papers could be written using these sources (be creative in thinking about this)?

For “A Few More Pieces of the Puzzle”
4. Identify and briefly describe 3 different sources found in this archive that you found the most interesting. What kinds of research papers could be written using these sources (be creative in thinking about this)?

For “Local History Materials in the California Room”
5. Identify and briefly describe 3 different sources found in this archive that you found the most interesting. What kinds of research papers could be written using these sources (be creative in thinking about this)?
ABBREVIATIONS

When grading your papers, I will make use of a number of abbreviations. Here is the legend to my abbreviation “code.”

DMS: Doesn’t make sense
UC: Unclear
RW: Reword/find another, more appropriate word
AWK: Awkward
FR: Sentence fragment
TRANS: Insert a transition
TS: Topic sentence needed
CS: Concluding sentence needed
AGR: Subject-verb agreement; verb does not match subject
DF: Doesn’t follow; sentence or idea does not logically follow from previous one

I will circle all simple grammatical errors (typos, spelling mistakes, wrong word choice, inappropriate use or lack of apostrophes, etc.). It is up to you to correct these. Below I have listed several mistakes that I see far too commonly. They are elements of grammar that should have been mastered in elementary school and have no place in university-level writing. Be aware that such mistakes will bring your grade down. If there are an excessive amount of grammatical errors in your paper, I reserve the right to hand it back to you without grading it. Some of these mistakes are (but are not limited to) the following:

• use of its versus it’s
• use of two, to, and too
• use of their, there, and they’re
• when to use an apostrophe (plurals versus possession)
• use of commas versus semicolons versus colons
• use of accept versus except
• use of affect versus effect
• use of throne versus thrown
• use of traitor versus trader
• spelling mistakes
• sentence fragments (will also be marked with an “FR”)

Also be sure to indent and single-space quotes that are longer than 3 lines. When you do this, you do not need to use quotation marks.
PLAGIARISM
What is plagiarism? Here is an explanation (and a warning):

**Definition**: Plagiarism means presenting the ideas and words of others as if they were your own. Building an argument of your own using the (acknowledged) ideas and research of others is not plagiarism. This is a creative activity and is the normal activity of working historians.

**How to avoid the charge of plagiarism:**
1. If you take a **fact** or **idea** directly from someone else, you **must** give a footnote reference. (Use your common sense about this. You do not need to footnote everything. The basic rule is to give a footnote for any information which is not easily available, or is controversial, or is particularly important for your argument. The purpose of the footnote is to allow the reader to assess the strength of the materials from which your argument is constructed.)
2. If you also use the exact words of your source (if you quote) then you must enclose the whole quotation in quotation marks (unless it has been indented and single-spaced; see above).
3. Take information from your sources, but **use your own words**.

**Why not plagiarize?**
1. Plagiarism of facts: If you do not explain where your information comes from, your reader cannot assess the reliability of your argument and will rightly distrust your conclusions. Plagiarism is a sign that you did not bother to check the evidence on which your argument is based.
2. Plagiarism of words. This is dishonest. It also stunts your intellectual development by encouraging habits of mechanical, imitative thinking. It encourages you to write without engaging your own mind, thoughts, and ideas. Finding the right language is an essential stage in building a historical argument, while using the language of others prevents you from developing an independent approach to intellectual problems. If you rely on the ideas and arguments of others, you will never develop the capacity to think through problems independently. Nor will you learn to express the results of your own thinking in the only proper language: your own.

**The Penalty**
For these reasons, any work that contains **any plagiarism at all** will be regarded as valueless. I reserve the right to give **zero credit** to plagiarized work. There will be no right of resubmission for work that contains any plagiarism (in line with University policy; see the University Catalog), and I will take the disciplinary action that is appropriate according to University policy.
History 450-Syllabus
Spring 2015 - De Vos

History 450-Guidelines for Writing Formal Papers

Your paper grade is based on how well you fulfill the following aspects of what constitutes a well-written paper. These aspects fall under three categories: organization, content (context, argument and evidence), and style and grammar. As I read your paper, I ask the following questions of it. I recommend that you do the same before you turn it in to me.

Organization
• Is the paper well organized? Does the reader know at all times exactly what he or she is reading about and why he or she is reading it?
• Does the paper have each of the necessary components? How well has the author done in writing each of these components
  o Introduction:
  o Does the paper start broadly and narrow to the specific topic of the paper?
  o Does it provide sufficient background for an intelligent non-expert to understand the topic that is addressed? (This is necessary throughout the paper).
  o Thesis statement (may be more than one sentence):
  o Does the introduction end with a clear statement of the paper’s thesis (claim)?
  o Does the thesis statement have a clear and specific argument?
  o Does the thesis take a stand that the author will prove throughout the paper?
  o Does the thesis include the subclaims that will be supported with evidence?
  o Support paragraphs or sections:
  o Does the number of support sections correspond to the number of sub-claims identified in the thesis? Do they go in the same order as they were written in the thesis?
  o Do the paragraphs specifically relate to the argument stated in the thesis? Do they adequately and logically prove what they are supposed to?
  o Do the paragraphs begin with a topic sentence that relates directly to the thesis statement?
  o Do the paragraphs include specific evidence that supports the argument being made?
  o Do the paragraphs have a concluding sentence (or sentences) that sum up what that section has proven?
  o Conclusion:
  o Does the conclusion restate the argument?
  o Does it then go on to make broader, more sweeping statements about the larger meaning of the thesis?

Content: Context, Argument, and Evidence
• How well does this paper fulfill the general spirit of the assignment?
• How well does the author demonstrate his or her understanding of the historical context?
• Is the argument sound? Is it original, creative, and thoughtful?
• What kinds of sources did the author use? Are there sufficient primary sources? Is the argument based on the primary sources. Does the majority of evidence come from primary sources?
• How well did the author make use of materials used? How well does evidence fit the argument? Are quotations used appropriately?
• Are works cited in an appropriate and uniform manner? Does the bibliography fulfill the requirements of the assignment?

Style and Grammar
• Are there grammatical errors? Spelling mistakes? Typographical errors? Has the author proofread his or her work carefully?
• Is the language appropriate to a formal paper?
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• Does the writing flow well? Is there too much passive voice or too many unnecessary words?
• Are sentences clear and complete? Does one sentence flow from the next in a logical, smooth manner?
• Does the author make use of transitions statements (however, although, therefore, nevertheless, etc.) at appropriate places in the paper?

Some final notes:
• Always type and double-space your papers, using standard margins and font size.
• Keep a copy of your paper as well.
• I strongly recommend that you obtain, read and refer regularly to one or more of the following books:
  Strunk, and White. *Elements of Style.* (highly recommended)
  Williams, Joseph M. *Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and Grace.*
Suggestions for First Draft:

1) Don’t panic! Remember that you’ve already done several bits of the paper, including the:
   a. Introduction
   b. Primary source paper
   c. And you have an outline to follow.

2) Start writing sooner than later
   a. There’s never a good time to start writing
   b. Start writing before you feel ready to
   c. You can continue researching while you write
   d. Write the paper in any order you want – start with the section that seems easiest or
   clearest to you

3) Determine which style of writing is yours
   a. “Quick and Dirty:” I recommend this style: when writing, don’t worry about
      grammar, punctuation, perfect footnotes, etc. Don’t try to make every sentence
      perfect. When you get stuck, then go back and revise what you have already written.
   b. “Slow and Clean:” This is a style in which the writer tries to make every sentence
      perfectly polished before going on to the next one. If this is your style, try to limit
      your perfectionism – it makes writing very difficult, and it makes revisions harder to
      do as well.

4) What to avoid:
   a. Don’t use the first person (I/me/my) in the paper – otherwise the paper can turn
      into “the story of your research,” something to be avoided.
   b. Don’t go through and summarize your primary sources one after another, strung
      together with a few sentences. Be sure that your descriptions of primary sources are
      serving a purpose in supporting a particular point of your argument, and make sure
      that you tell the reader what it supports specifically, and how and why it does so.
   c. Along a similar line, try to be as analytical as possible: make a list of your evidence
      and see what it has in common – how can evidence be organized into larger
      categories and themes? How can these categories and themes be arranged to
      support your argument?

5) Order of the paper
   a. Divide the paper into sections with “subtitles” in each section.
   b. Begin with an introduction in which you state your argument.
   c. The next section of your paper will probably be a “background” section in which
      you give the reader just enough information about the context of your topic so that
      he/she can understand your paper and the significance of your argument. There
      will be a temptation to let this section take over the paper, since it relies mainly on
      secondary sources and thus will feel “safer.” But don’t let it take over! The section
      should be no more than 4 pages, 5 if absolutely necessary.
   d. The following sections of your paper will be the “heart” of your paper, and there is
      no specific number for these – you’ll probably have between two and four of these
      sections.
   e. The last section of the paper will be the conclusion. The conclusion should be no
      more than 1 to 2 pages.

6) Remember that though this is a first draft, it is worth 20% of your grade. That means that
   you should do your very best to produce the most polished piece of work you can. At the
   same time, I realize that most writers do not fully understand or truly realize what their
   argument is until they have finished writing a first draft – so you don’t have to do it perfectly
   the first time around.

Good luck!
WORKSHEET FOR EVALUATING PREVIOUS 450 PAPERS

I. Read each paper and evaluate them according to the following criteria.

Organization:
- Does the introduction to this paper give a clear idea of its content and organization? Does it give you adequate historical background so that you can understand the subject and why it is important?
- Is the paper organized in clearly marked sections so that you know why you are reading each section? Do you understand clearly how each section supports the main argument?
- Does each paragraph begin with a topic sentence so that you understand the direction or “flow” of the paper?

Argument:
- Do you know what the argument of the paper is? Does the author state the argument clearly? Do you understand how the author has supported the argument?
- What evidence does the author use? Is there sufficient evidence to support the argument? What sources, primary and secondary, does the author use?
- Did the author use footnotes and quotations appropriately? Do you see any risk of plagiarism in this paper?

Style:
- Is the paper easy to read or is it hard to follow? Does it flow nicely, using transitions, varying sentence structure, and employing a sophisticated vocabulary? Or are there a number of grammatical errors and awkward sentences that hinder your ability to read the paper?
- Do you find the paper interesting?

II. Based on these criteria, answer the following questions for each paper:

1. What grade would you give this paper?
   Paper 1: _______  Paper 2: _______

2. Explain in detail why you gave the paper this grade. In doing so, think about how you answered the above questions on organization, argument, and style.
   Paper 1:

   Paper 2:

3. On the back of this sheet, write down suggestions as to how the student could improve the paper. If you were this student's instructor, what comments would you make? What would you tell this student to do – again basing your suggestions on organization, argument, and style – in order to improve? Be detailed in your comments: this is the most effective way for the student to do better next time (and the best way for you to learn as well).