

**ROOSEVELT UNIVERSITY
HISTORY PROGRAM**

INSTRUCTIONS FOR WRITING TERM PAPERS (2007)

All History Majors working for a B.A. degree at Roosevelt University must write **three** term papers in connection with History courses above the 200-level in order to graduate. Term papers must be typed and submitted in duplicate. The instructor will forward one copy to the Department Chair for the History Department files. The following suggestions may be of help.

CHOOSING A TOPIC. The topic must have your instructor's approval. Ordinarily it will concern a historical problem in the course for which the paper is written. Try not to choose too broad a topic, since a paper is expected to be more than a rehash of textbook materials. The most fruitful topics are usually those which can be phrased in question form or which suggest a problem to be solved.

COMPILING A BIBLIOGRAPHY. Before you begin writing or taking notes, prepare a list of books and articles that you intend to examine. The computer catalog and bibliographies in the reference rooms of Roosevelt University libraries are good places to begin. Reference librarians are always on duty to assist you. Your instructor or the assigned textbook may also provide a bibliography. Other bibliographic aids for history topics are:

Books:

- a. *The Harvard Guide to American History*
- b. American Historical Association, *Guide to Historical Literature* (latest edition).
- c. Volumes in the *Oxford History of England* series.

Computer Databases: (available on the RU Library Website:

http://www2.roosevelt.edu/library/search_journals.htm):

- d. American History and Life
- e. First Search
- f. JSTOR Journal Archive (links to online full-text articles)

An excellent index for recent articles in scholarly journals such as *The American Historical Review*, *Journal of Modern History*, *History Today* and *The Journal of American History* can be found in *The International Index* (A Guide to Periodical Literature in the Social Sciences and Humanities).

Be Sure to include primary as well as secondary sources in your bibliography. Primary sources are those created during the period under investigation and include documents, state papers, speeches, contemporary travel accounts, census data, diaries, memoirs, and autobiographies. Secondary sources are reconstructions and interpretations of primary sources. Textbooks and encyclopedia articles ordinarily **are not acceptable** for your bibliography.

The following websites may be helpful when you begin to compile your bibliography:

Compiling a Bibliography (University of Warwick):

http://www.warwick.ac.uk/EAP/study_skills/compiling_a_bibliography/

The Preparation of Historical Essays (includes compiling a bibliography from University of

Toronto): <http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/history/undergraduate/essays.html>

Reading, Writing, and Research for History: Research Papers – a Working Bibliography
(Bowdoin College):

<http://academic.bowdoin.edu/WritingGuides/researching/papers/html/bibliography.shtml>

Be sure to consult with your professor concerning website research. He or she will be able to direct you to legitimate sites or evaluate sites that you have located.

TAKING NOTES. It is usually best to take notes on small sheets of paper or on note cards (or by creating similar “news bites” on your computer), and not to put down too many different items on any one of them. This way the sheets or cards maybe shuffled when the time comes to organize the term paper. Every time you take a note, be sure to identify the source (including page number) exactly.

THE FORMAT. The term paper must be on 8.5”x11” paper, with a margin of at least one inch on the left side and ¾ inch on the right. The content of the paper must be double-spaced except for quotations of five lines or more, which should be indented and single-spaced. Footnotes and the bibliography are single-spaced (with double-space between items). Place the title, your name, the class, the name of the instructor, and the date at the beginning of the paper or title page.

- A. **Introduction.** The title or title page should be followed by an introduction in which you outline the topic, raise the questions you hope to answer in the main body of the paper, and indicate the methods by which you intend to do so.
- B. **Main Body.** This contains the “heart” of your paper. Be sure that it has recognizable structure and organization. Every time you make a statement that is not common knowledge, and every time you quote, you must employ a footnote giving the source of your information. Students should consult the *Chicago Manual of Style* or Turabian’s *A Manual for Writers of Term papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (see section “G”) for proper footnote or endnote forms. Although there are one or two note form variations (particularly with regard to publication information), you must be consistent. Here are some examples:

¹ R.C.K. Ensor, *England, 1870-1914* (Oxford, 1936), p. 83.

² Robert H. Wiebe “The House of Morgan and the Executive,” *American Historical Review*, 65 (Oct. 1959): 50.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

⁴ Cited in *The Portable Medieval Reader*, eds. James Bruce Ross and Mary Martin McLoughlin (New York, 1949), p. 73.

⁵ Wiebe, “The House of Morgan and the Executive,” 57-59.

Internet citations should look like this:

Author or Editor. Date. *Title of work*. Edition. Available Protocol [Type of medium]: <Protocol/Site/Path/File> additional: retrieval information [Access date].

or

Author or Editor. Date. *Title of work*. Edition. Available [Type of medium]: Supplier/Database identifier or number/Item name or number [Access date].

Examples:

⁶ Livy. "The Dionysiac Scandal in Italy," *History of Rome* Book 39. 8-19: 186 B.C. Available [Online]: <<http://www.csun.edu/~hcf11004/sc-bacch.html>> [27 November 2001].

⁷ Perpetua. *Medieval Sourcebook: St. Perpetua: The Passion of Saints Perpetua and Felicity* 203 adapted from H.W. Shewring, trans. *The Passion of Perpetua and Felicity* (London, 1931). Available [Online]: <<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/perpetua.html>> [26 November 2001].

⁸ Eleanor Roosevelt to Walter White, 19 March 1936, Papers of National Association of Colored People (Library of Congress). Available [Online]: <<http://memory.loc.gov/ammen/meem/mehtml/presb.html#FDR>> Select: Eleanor Roosevelt to Walter White detailing the First Lady's lobby efforts for federal action against lynchings. [June 4, 2002].

In a term paper you begin footnote numbering at the beginning of the paper and carry it through the entire paper, unless your instructor advises otherwise. Endnotes are put together at the end of the paper before your bibliography. Otherwise the footnotes belong at the bottom of the page to which they refer. If your paper is divided into several chapters, it may be desirable to begin numbering anew with each chapter. In this case, endnotes may follow each chapter. When you are writing your footnotes and you see that you are citing textual (rather than source) information from the footnote of a book you have already collected, reference the following example:

¹ Leila J. Rupp, *Mobilizing Women for War: German and American Propaganda, 1939-1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), n. 6, p. 13.

Note that it is inappropriate to cite another author's source information (i.e. footnote) as your own.

- C. **Conclusion.** In your conclusion, sum up what the evidence in the main body of the paper has demonstrated and what it has failed to demonstrate.
- D. **Appendix.** Some term papers call for the inclusion of a table, document, or series of statistics that do not fit into the main body of the paper. In that case, place the table(s) in an appendix immediately after your conclusion.
- E. **Bibliography.** The bibliography should be arranged alphabetically with the last name of the author first. For example:

Ensor, R.C.K. *England, 1870-1914*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1936.

Ross, James Bruce and Mary Martin McLaughlin (eds). *The Portable Medieval Reader*. New York: Viking Press, 1949.

Wiebe, Robert H. "The House of Morgan and the Executive," *American Historical Review*, 65 (Oct. 1959): 49-65.

When Citing Internet sites in your bibliography, consult "Citing Electronic Information in History Papers" at <http://www.people.memphis.edu/~mcrouse/elcite.html>.

Internet citations should look like this:

Author or Editor.

Title of Work. Edition. Date. Available Protocol [Type of medium]:
<Protocol/Site/Path/File> Additional: retrieval information [Access date].

or

Author or Editor.

Title of Work. Edition. Date. Available [Type of medium: Supplier/Database identifier or number/Item name or number [Access date].

Examples:

Eagle, Arnold and David Robins. "One-Third of a Nation" [photo]. 1938. National Archives and Records Administration. Available [Online].
<http://www.archives.gov/exhibit_hall/picturing_the_century/galleries/greatdep.html#>
Select: One-third of a Nation. [June 4, 2002].

Library of Congress. "Interview with WPA Silkscreen Artist Tony Velonis." 1994.
Available [Online]: <<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/wpaposters/velonis.html>> Select:
Interview with WPA Silkscreen Author Tony Velonis. [June 4, 2002]

When your bibliography is a long one, it may be desirable to separate it into two alphabetical groups, one comprising primary sources and the other secondary sources. Consult your instructor as to whether your bibliography should include:

- a. Only those items previously cited in footnotes, or
- b. All relevant books and articles which you have consulting in preparing the paper, whether cited in footnotes or not.

F. **Length and style.** There is no single standard applicable to all term papers. It is, however, difficult to write a meaningful paper in less than twelve pages. A term paper fifty pages in length, on the other hand, may indicate that you have not learned to be concise.

Instructors may vary in their requirements, but quality is always an important criterion. Quality means thoroughness in research, care in organization, and care in preparation of your paper. Try to express your ideas clearly and simply. Observe the

rules of English grammar and do not hesitate to consult a dictionary when in doubt about spelling or definition. Proofread the final text before you hand it in.

- G. **Guide.** When in doubt as to the proper form, consult Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1996). See also *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 14th ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993). Copies are always available in the reference rooms of the Roosevelt University libraries. It may be wise also to consult a recent article in the *American Historical Review* or *The Journal of Modern History* as an example of the manner in which a term paper should be organized and documented. *The Chicago Manual of Style* also has a website that may be of assistance. Check out the Chicago Manual of Style FAQ at <http://www.press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/cmosfaq.html>.
- H. **Plagiarism.** Plagiarism occurs when an author attempts to pass off another person's work as his or her own. It includes the borrowing of another person's phrases, sentences, data, ideas and interpretations without proper attribution. Attribution should come in the form of quotation marks and/or a citation. Please note that close paraphrasing without quotation marks – even with a citation – constitutes plagiarism. Although information considered “common knowledge” does not need to be footnoted, ideas or interpretations borrowed from another author should be cited. Remember that more documentation is better than less, so when in doubt, footnote. Plagiarism is a serious offense and will result in a failing grade. Please see the Roosevelt University student handbook for further discussion of plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty.
- I. **Do not hesitate to bring further questions to your instructor about the content or form of your paper.**