

Senior Research Paper Assignment - Fall 2024 – HIS 4100

All History majors are required to develop a final research-based argumentative paper as part of the Senior Seminar capstone experience. Students will be held to the same assessment rubric regardless of their track (BS Multidisciplinary; BS History/Social Studies Education; BS Applied and Public; BA History). Submissions will include two versions of the same paper - one with your name and course section number, and one without (to keep your work anonymous for department self-evaluations).

A Senior Thesis must be an original research project of no fewer than 5,000 words and no more than 6,000 words ... **not** counting notes and bibliography.

DUE DATE >> The deadline for your **final** version of the research paper is by the end of your Final Exam period. (see Syllabus and Course Website + Calendar)

THE MARATHON ANALOGY

A senior thesis cannot be a sprint. If you try to complete it in one single burst of energy, you will collapse in that heap of sweat and exhaustion long before the finish is even in sight. You won't make it. For the senior thesis, you have to complete the project one step at a time. You must methodically pace yourself so that you have enough in the tank throughout the course of the race to make it to the end.

Think of project development as your training for the marathon to come. You've done a great portion of this training already. You have learned, that is, in your classes and your sophomore and junior History courses, how to ask analytical questions and how to conduct research. You've learned how to write a formal essay in which you introduce an argument, defend that argument with evidence, and conclude that argument by explaining its wider significance.

In project development, the idea is to generate the raw materials of an extended research project – as many of them as you possibly can – in a methodical and efficient manner. It's important to take your time, to cast your net widely, and to keep an open mind. You want to make sure not to make final decisions about what your project will look like too hastily. You will, of course, eventually have to make some hard choices and stick with them, so prepare yourself for that. But that comes later. During the project development stage, you must allow yourself to dream a little.

*– from A Guide to Writing a Thesis in History and Literature, Committee on Degrees in History and Literature
Faculty of Arts and Sciences Harvard University*

SPECIFICS >>

- Footer: your name, your course section, and page number
 - Title of Paper at the top of page one
 - Body - Logistics
 - Length: 5,000 to 6,000 words (approx. 20-24 pages if double spaced)
 - Line Spacing: 1.5 or 2 lines (aka double spaced)
 - Margins: 1" all around preferred.
 - Font type: Times New Roman is recommended, but use a serif type for easy to read in print version.
 - Font size: 12 (or equal to 12 if using Garamond or other tighter font types)
 - Body - Structure
 - Introduction - usually 2-4 paragraphs
 - Logical, sequential sections (sub-sections not needed, but may prove useful)
 - Conclusion - tighter, usually 1-2 paragraphs
 - Citations: either footnotes or endnotes - not both - in correct Chicago Style.
 - Final Pages = **Bibliography**, separated by Primary Source databases and a complete list of Secondary Sources referenced or used in the research and writing process.
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TOPIC

Any time period, any part of the world, and any thematic focus is open for you to choose from as you plan your research ... ***as long as it focuses on the "middle class"*** or other groups that functioned as in-between the elite, ruling class and the majority (i.e. laborers, workers, working class, slaves, etc.)

Be creative. Explore widely. Find a focus that excites you! Don't be afraid to push yourself in new directions if you find a research "spark."

Be mindful of primary source research feasibility, but don't be afraid either!

ASSESSMENT

Your paper will be assessed using the HIS Dept. rubric for Senior Seminar papers, adopted in 2012 and revised in 2021. A copy of the rubric is available on the HIS 4100 course website ("[Grading](#)") - you can view and download a version for reference.