AP US: Research Paper

Purpose: The short (10-20 page) research paper is a frequent requirement for undergraduate students in college, especially in History classes. The goal of this assignment is to walk you through the process of writing a college style History paper so that when you get to college you already know how to do it. Your final product should be a paper that your would be proud to submit to any college professor in the country. An additional goal of this assignment is to allow you to explore a topic of interest to you that we might not have spent much time on in class this year.

The overall assignment: Research an American History topic of your choosing from 1607-2005. Write a well researched paper of 10-15 pages (3500-5000 words excluding bibliography.) You will be expected to present your research to the class in a 10 minute presentation after you have written the paper.

Stepping Stone Assignments: There are 3 “Stepping Stone Assignments” intended to help you through the process of revising your topic and organizing your findings prior to writing your actual paper. Each of these counts as much as a quiz grade.

Grading for Term 4
Tests Category
1. Freedom Riders Essay
2. Period 8 Exam
3. Research Proposal
4. Annotated Bibliography
5. Annotated Outline
6. Research Paper (Counts as your final exam)
7. Research Presentation (During final exam blocks)

Homework Category
1. American Yawp Reading checks prior to AP Exam
2. Review assignments during AP Week
3. Research reflection write ups

Classwork Category
1. Teacherless discussions in week prior to Period 8 Test
2. Diligence and effort during library research days
3. Appropriate audience engagement and interaction during Research Presentations
US History Research Paper
Stepping Stone Assignments

- The following assignments represent key steps towards completing your research paper.
- You should notice that each step builds on the previous steps.
- If you follow the steps honestly, the final paper will be MUCH easier to complete.
- Each of the following assignments will count as quiz grade.
- GRADING: Each assignment will be graded as follows: (Score out of 20 x 5 = Score out of 100)
  - 5 pts - Complete and turned assignment in on time / typed.
  - 5 pts - Free of major proofreading / editing errors. (1st one free then -10 each)
  - 10 pts - Addresses all of the parts of the assignment thoroughly

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>1. Research proposal</td>
<td>Write a 200-300 word summary of what you plan to research and write about for your paper. The research proposal should include: a. Description of your intended topic, b. Why you think this is a worthwhile topic, c. What sub-questions you think will come up within the topic d. Bibliographic description of at least 2 sources (not wikipedia or textbook) that you have already consulted and expect to use.</td>
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<td>DUE: Wed May 16</td>
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<td>2. Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>You should list 6-10 sources (not wikipedia or a textbook) that you have already consulted in proper bibliographic format. At least 2 of your sources must be traditional history books that you can physically show to the instructor. For each of your sources you should include a short paragraph that: a. Describes the source. b. Specifically explains how you expect this source will fit into your paper a. Examples of evidence / information you expect to pull from this source. (at least 3 each)</td>
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<td>DUE: Wed Friday May 25</td>
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<td>3. Annotated Outline</td>
<td>You should turn in a skeleton version of your paper that lists/ describes: a. The topics / subtopics that you will write about, b. Bullet notes about what you intend to say about the topics and c. How will you connect your topics to your sources. (footnotes) d. It should also include page length estimates for each topic / subtopic.</td>
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<td>DUE Wed May 30</td>
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Final Papers will be due 6/12 to 6/22 depending on which day you are scheduled to present.
AP US History – Research Paper
Grading

20 Points - Format and Proofreading:
- Your paper should be 10-13 pages not including your bibliography. You do not need a separate cover page. It should be submitted electronically, and on paper.
- It should be double spaced, 12 point font. (Approx 3600-4500 words)
- It should be clearly organized into many paragraphs, and should contain a distinct introduction and conclusion.
- It should be free of typos / proofreading / spelling errors. (1st two are free, -3 for each one afterwards.)
- The sentences should make sense / what you are trying to say should be clear. (Unclear sentences will be treated like proofreading errors.)

20 Points – Main Idea of the Paper / Thesis / Primary Argument
- Your overall point should be made clear early in the paper.
- You should describe any relevant sub-points that clarify or enhance your main argument.
- You should make it clear that your paper makes an argument or demonstrates a point and is not simply a description of well known information.
- You should indicate WHY this idea merits significant attention.

20 Points – How well your paper supports the thesis with supporting evidence.
- The body section of your paper should center on detailed examples from your research that demonstrate the main elements of your thesis.
- Each example that you use should be contextualized: introduce the example, and explain how it fits into your argument. The emphasis should always be how does this help me to make my point?
- Direct quotes should be short, and targeted: Do not use long quotes as a way to fill up pages.

20 Footnoting / Citations
- The supporting examples that you use in your paper should be properly cited using the Chicago / Turabian style.
- Any quotes / specific sources of data must be cited.
- The ideas or conclusions of the authors that you researched need to be cited.
- General knowledge info such as The Civil War ended in 1865 does not need to be cited.
- Your own original conclusions do not need to be cited, but if they build on the work of others than that should be mentioned / cited.
- A paper of this length should have at least 6-10 citations. (Often much more.)
- When in doubt give credit to your source – OVERCITING CANNOT HURT YOU, UNDERCITING CAN!

20 Points – Bibliography
- Your paper should rely on at least 5 different sources that are described in proper bibliographic format, using Chicago / Turabian style.
- You should not list sources in your bibliography that you did not actually use.
- At least 2 of your sources must be traditional history books that you physically show me prior to turning in your paper.
- At least 1 of your sources should be a substantial primary source. (Not just a quote.)
- Online sources need a full citation, not just the website.
- Wikipedia and your textbook are not appropriate sources for your bibliography. (Even though you may have consulted them as a jumping off point.)
Your Oral Presentation

- On the due date that you have signed up for, you will submit your paper, and present the information in your paper to the class.
- Your presentation should NOT be a re-reading of your paper out loud.
- You are teaching the class about your topic.
- Your presentation should include some kind of visual aid (powerpoint / handout / short video etc)
- Your presentation should last about 7 to 10 minutes.

Grading:

30 Points – Preparation
- You are ready to go on the assigned day.
- You have all of the necessary materials with you and have checked that they will work. (*My flashdrive won’t load..... I’m having Mac / PC issues ... My dog ate it - These are all variations on the same theme I’m not prepared...*)
- You clearly know your material and are not guessing / winging it.

30 Points – Visual Aid
- Along with your oral presentation you will prepare and use some kind of visual that helps to communicate your main points. This might be a video, a slideshow, or physical props.
- Your visual should help the presentation along. It will be graded on the degree to which it facilitates your presentation.
- Your visual should help make the main points of your presentation memorable.
- Your visual should be neat, clean, and easy for everyone to read / see.
- Your visual should reflect obvious effort and not look like you put it together in a few minutes before school that day.
- Your visual should be integrated into your presentation, not a separate entity.

30 Points – Delivery / Presentation
- You **present** to the class: You don’t just read and mumble for 5 minutes.
- You are loud enough, and you don’t speak too quickly.
- You begin your presentation with an introduction to the topic:
  - Include why you chose this topic.
  - Include why this topic is important in American History.
- You clearly explain to the class what you expected to find out through this project and how your expectations were similar / different to what you really did find out.
- You explain the basic information in your paper clearly and logically to the class.
- You summarize your presentation before finishing.

10 Points - Intangibles / Oomph! DO SOMETHING TO MAKE IT STAND OUT!
- Your presentation should clearly reflect the fact that you’ve had 2 months to do this project.
- You should do something in your presentation to try to make it stand out from the others – Distinguish it from the dreaded *Eighth grade mumble.*
- Even if your attempts at a unique / intriguing presentation fail, the audience should be able to clearly see that you tried.
- Ideas that you might consider: Create a video instead of a powerpoint. Act out something about your presentation. Involve the audience in the presentation.