

Research Paper Guidelines

When preparing and writing the research papers, students must be attentive to the following basic requirements. It is imperative that students read and follow these guidelines to ensure a good grade.

- 1) A research paper involves both the gathering of information and developing a student's own interpretation of that information. The student must stay focused on his or her chosen topic and rely upon his or her sources for information about that topic. While a student's own opinions about a topic are an important part of any research process, the student must be able to support his or her conclusions by direct reference to sources.
- 2) The writing must be clear and logical and as free of spelling and grammatical errors as possible. A student should never submit a paper without rereading and proofing it. It may even be necessary to get someone to assist in this process by having him or her read the paper and check for these mistakes. The student should not fail to run spell-check on his or her writing.

Please remember that easily correctable spelling and grammatical mistakes left uncorrected will result in significant loss of points.

- 3) This paper requires MLA formatting that includes:
 - a. 12-point font
 - b. double-spaced sentences
 - c. title and personal identification
 - d. a separate works cited page properly formatted
 - e. specific bibliographical form for print and electronic sources in your works cited
 - f. a specific form for parenthetical (in-text) citations of the sources listed in your works cited

The student will be graded on how well his or her style conforms to the above basic requirements in MLA.

- 4) The works cited must include no less than **four** sources. Those sources must be relevant to the topic and meet minimum academic qualifications. The acceptable types of sources include the following:
 - a. class text
 - b. print or electronic book
 - c. electronic, peer-reviewed journal article
 - d. website with a .edu address
- 5) Certain sources do **not** qualify for works cited. You will be penalized if you use them. These are:
 - a. Wikipedia
 - b. standard dictionary or encyclopedia (web or paper)
 - c. any website not .edu

The student should remember that any source listed in your works cited that does not meet the above criteria will not count towards the minimum number of required sources.

- 6) For every source listed in the works cited, a student must have at least one corresponding parenthetical (in-text) reference. This will demonstrate how a student has used the source.

The student should remember that any source not accompanied by at least one parenthetical reference (and any parenthetical reference not associated with a source in your works cited) will not count towards the minimum number of required sources.

While research is vital, so is the proper accounting for that research. All students must use MLA guidelines for the papers. For a sample of a correctly formatted paper, please see the following:

- MLA Tutorial: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/07/>
- MLA Sample Paper: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/media/pdf/20090701095636_747.pdf

25% of the grade will be based on the proper formatting and citing. The paper can have great content and still not be an “A” paper if it is not properly formatted and cited.

The following is the grading criteria rubric for the Research Paper:

Format	5%	➤ Format includes the proper use of inline citations, paper formatting, and works cited formatting.
Acceptable Resources	20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Students will receive 5 points for every acceptable resource. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ These are research papers, good sources are necessary. ➤ Acceptable resources (Students must have all four to qualify for the full 20%.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ One from the text (Mueller, Tkacik, or Vatican II text) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Lumen Gentium</i> • <i>Gadium et Spes</i> • <i>Dignitatis Humanae</i> • <i>Nostra Aetate</i> • Letter 28 – St Leo’s Tome ➤ Another book, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bible Dictionary or Encyclopedia (print or electronic) If the book is online, it is a book, not a website. • Standard print book ➤ Website <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • .edu only (In Google, put the following after the search criteria: site:edu) • Non .edu website if it is reached from an .edu Students will need to put a footnote in the paper to show the original .edu site. • Students must be careful to check the author to make sure it is not another undergraduate student. • The URL is required for this class. Students should be specific and copy the full URL the way it appears on the page he or she is using. ➤ Peer-reviewed article <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a journal found on EBSCO. Instructions for EBSCO are under the Doc Sharing tab. • This does not qualify as a website; it is a journal. ➤ Unacceptable resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any Wiki, standard dictionaries, or encyclopedias • Use only bible/theological dictionaries or encyclopedias • Any non .edu site such as .org or .com
Content	75%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Grading of content is based on the way research is used in the paper. ➤ The best option is to summarize and recap the research material. Students must not use a lot of quotes. ➤ If students do use quotes, they must make good use of them.
Word Count: 1500-2000		
➤ Word count does not include the headings or works cited.		

Notes for Sources:

- Students can find peer-reviewed journal articles using EBSCO on the Cannon Library site. See instructions for getting to EBSCO under Doc Sharing.
- As students seek out additional resources via the Internet, a word of caution is in order. Many Internet sites are not reliable sources of accurate information on our subject matter, regardless of how they may be presented by their designers, and students need to exercise great caution and prudence when selecting such resources. Students should contact the instructor if they have any questions about such sources; it is always better to check with the instructor first than to have problems later!
- One popular Internet site is, of course, Wikipedia; under no circumstances should this site be used as a source for any activity or project in this class. Wikipedia is not a reliable source, because there is no serious quality control exercised over the material presented on the site.
- While it is encouraged to use as many resources as possible, students must exercise rigorous critical evaluation of their online sources. Simply being online does not make something accurate, true, or current.