The term-paper for this course is to be done on a topic of your choice from the subject matter and time period this class covers, meaning:

World Civilizations,

3500BC-1600AD

It is to be between (a full) 5 and 7 (full) pages (NO MORE & NO LESS). Do not use: large/small fonts, abnormal spacing, massive chapter subdivisions, outlines/numbered sequence points etc.) Do not use extended quotes (meaning more than a few lines). Double spacing, 12 point fonts and 1 inch margins are the maximum.

You must turn in 1 electronic copy through Safe Assignment (your TA may also want a hard copy).

For the paper you must use 4 sources:

2 secondary sources meaning scholarly books written by a university professor. Any book in the campus library will fulfill this requirement. If you find books elsewhere and are unsure, look inside the book since many provide a biography of the author. Also you can check the publisher; if the publisher is a university press it is fine. Ebooks through our library website are acceptable.

Journal articles are also acceptable to fulfill this requirement but only journal articles found online on JSTOR which are at least 20 pages in length.  This site is accessible through the campus library website. Remember, these articles must come from scholarly journals such as the Journal of Roman Studies or the Journal of Asian Studies.  Articles from magazines such as National Geographic or Newsweek do not count.

DON’TS:

With the exception of ebooks through the UCR library and JSTOR, all other internet sources such as sites like Wikipedia are NOT acceptable and will not fulfill this requirement.

The main textbook and other modern books assigned for this class DO NOT count towards fulfilling this requirement.

Lecture notes DO NOT count as secondary sources. They represent my research and should not be cited in your paper.

You CANNOT use a paper from another class-this must be a new and original paper.

DO NOT use books/articles aimed at young people/children.

DO NOT use books/articles that are too old (nothing from the nineteenth or first half of the twentieth centuries).

DO NOT use anything with “Dictionary” or “Encyclopedia” in the title.

2 primary sources written by someone who was roughly contemporaneous with the topic you are describing. You always want to find eyewitness accounts (if they exist) or accounts written by someone who was alive during the period of your topic. If these do not exist, then you want to find sources written by someone who lived shortly after the period of your topic. This could mean as much as a few centuries afterwards since these people would have access to sources that no longer exist today. For example, if you are writing a paper on Julius Caesar you would first use Caesar’s own accounts of his military campaigns. Then you could also find accounts written by his contemporaries such as Cicero before moving on to later authors who wrote biographies of Caesar or histories of his time. Some of these authors lived a few centuries later but are still acceptable.

The campus library has a huge selection of primary sources translated into English for all periods of history no matter what your topic. Also, many primary sources are now online. It is acceptable to use the internet to fulfill the primary source requirement.

Primary sources assigned for this class CAN be used towards fulfilling this requirement.

The first step in finding sources is choosing a topic. Once you have a topic go to the campus library and search the library computer catalogue. For example, if your topic is the Chinese voyages of Yung-lo look up China and Yung-lo. Sometimes you get lucky and there is a specific book about your topic. In other cases you may find general histories of your period such as, in this case, a history of China that covers the late 1300’s and early 1400’sAD. Once you find the book or books on the library shelves, you can then find information about your topic.  More importantly, these books can lead you to other secondary and primary sources. Check the bibliographies of the books you found since they will list dozens of secondary sources (books and articles) the author used which you can then find in the library. Also, the author will discuss in detail the various primary sources for your topic which you can then find in the library or online.

When choosing a topic DO NOT pick subjects that are too broad for such a short paper.

DO NOT do a biography of a famous person or the rise and fall of a dynasty or empire.

DO NOT compare & contrast ancient topics, or compare & contrast an ancient and a modern topic.

Your paper must have a proper bibliography page at the end (the bibliography page does not count towards the page total). The bibliography must contain all the information about each source you used. It must include the author’s name (last name first), the year the book was published, the title of the book (in italics), and the publisher. For a journal article, you must include the author’s name, year published, title (in quotation marks), the name of the journal (in italics), and page numbers. For primary sources either include the above information from the book along with the name of the translator or the information from the website where you found the source.

In your paper all references and quotes must have proper footnotes. Since there will be a full citation in the bibliography you do not need a full citation in each footnote. Instead in the footnotes only include the author’s name and the page number where you found your information. If the footnote is from a primary source include the author’s name and page or chapter number. When trying to decide when to quote the sources, a few “rules of thumb” are useful. You should always cite the sources if you are using information from them that you did not already know (again don’t cite the lectures). Additionally, cite the sources or offer quotations when you think they enrich or support your point. For instance, if you are describing the cruelty of Caligula, offer a quote from a source that would make your point. Imagine that you were reading your paper in a presentation and think of the quotes as if they were pictures: whenever you would want to show the audience a picture to make your point or give them a better idea of what you mean, then add a quote. If you are making claims that may be controversial, then quotes/citations are more important. Chicago, APA or MLA are all OK.

These are the requirements.

Do not turn in papers which ignore these requirements or your paper will be marked down.

Late papers will marked down as well: 1 letter grade for each day it is late.

These papers must be your own work: PLAGIARISM IS ILLEGAL. Plagiarized papers will be given a zero and you will receive an F for the course. In addition the matter will be referred to university administration.

Last but not least: proofread your papers! Do not ruin an “A” paper with shoddy grammar/spelling etc.

If you are having problems fulfilling these guidelines please see me.

Suggestions

1. Your paper should have a clear thesis or argument within the introduction. The introduction itself is one of the most important parts of the paper. As a rough suggestion, the introductory paragraph (or few paragraphs) should introduce the subject of your paper, state your thesis, and offer some information on how the paper will be organized or how your argument will proceed.   For instance, if the topic of your paper was on the role/importance of the Praetorian Guard in the early Roman Empire, you could offer a thesis such as: “The Praetorian Guard exerted noticeable influence on the political system of the early Roman Empire, at least during key moments of crisis.” When commenting on the structure of your argument (or organization of the paper), you could write: “The terror carried out by Sejanus, the role of Macro in Gaius Caligula’s rise to the position of emperor, the conspiracy of Cassius Chaerea, and the insertion of Claudius by the Praetorian Guard all indicate that this elite body of troops was able to threaten, remove, and even install emperors during this period of the Empire.” In this example, your reader would know that you were going to discuss (1) Sejanus, (2) Macro/Caligula, (3) Cassius Chaerea’s conspiracy, and (4) Claudius in separate sections or paragraphs of your paper. That format could provide the general outline of your whole paper.   One way of evaluating your introduction is to ask yourself: “If all of my paper blew away in the wind on the way to class and the professor could read only my introduction, would he know what my paper is about?” If not, then you may want to rework your introduction. I stress this because the best papers have the best introductions.   2. If you are having trouble deciding what will be the topic of your paper, a good place to start would be to choose a topic that interests you personally. If you are interested in food or dress, write on Roman sumptuary laws (laws governing consumption: what can people eat, who can wear what, etc.) and if you are interested in boxing, then write on Roman gladiatorial fights. As long as you are scholarly in your approach, even unconventional subjects may be appropriate. If you are interested in your topic, your paper will generally be more enjoyable to read. Of course, for controversial topics, you should ask the professor first. In any event it is usually a good idea to run ideas by your professor before you begin since you do not wish to choose a subject that is so big it will not fit into a 5-7 page paper. For example, a biography on the whole life of Alexander or Cleopatra will simply not work since there is far too much information for a short paper of this type. It is possible though to pick 1 specific event or aspect of their careers to write about. Also, you do not want to pick a topic that is so obscure you cannot find enough information or enough sources to fill a 5-7 page paper.   3. When trying to decide on the thesis of your paper, a few considerations are helpful. Ask yourself what drew you to the topic. If you had a specific question in mind, then providing the answer to that question could be a valid thesis. If you had no specific questions in mind, then you can look at the secondary literature you are reading for the paper (i.e. things written by modern scholars/historians) and see what their thesis is. Their thesis might give you ideas. An important consideration when deciding on a thesis is that you should only present a specific thesis when you have enough sources/evidence to argue for that conclusion. For instance, if you have a large number of sources (primary and secondary) that claim that Tiberius encouraged Sejanus in his reign of terror, then you are warranted in positing that as your thesis. If not, then you probably can’t argue that thesis effectively.

4. Likewise, when trying to decide on how to focus your paper, a major consideration should be the amount of material you have on each subject. For instance, if you are writing on Ovid’s banishment by Augustus and can’t decide whether you should focus more on the actual conditions of living in Tomis or on the significance of the banishment, determine what amount of evidence you have from the sources. If the vast majority of your sources describe the significance, then focusing on the living conditions will prove very difficult. In other words, write what the sources enable you to write. Another consideration is the “So what?” question: decide which elements are most important and interesting. Of course, I can give suggestions on this matter.

5.  When trying to decide what you need to explain or include in your paper, assume that your audience is a fellow classmate with fairly respectable attendance in our class. You may exclude things from your paper that they could be expected to know, except if it is essential to your subject. For instance, you don’t have to state that Augustus was effectively the first emperor and then cite your source. Still, anything that you feel is necessary to convince your reader of the truth of your thesis should be included. Likewise, facts that are completely irrelevant to your argument can probably be removed.

6. Think of your paper as a combination of narrative and argumentation. You are telling a story in your paper, but you want the reader to draw very specific conclusions from what you have said. Have enough narration (story-telling) to make sure your reader can follow the arguments, and enough argumentation that your reader understands the significance or meaning of the story you are telling.

If you have any questions, ask your professor or your TA.

Good Luck!