

History Area Style Guide¹
Upper-Division and Graduate Level Papers
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

I. Criteria for All History Papers

Grading: History papers that fail to follow proper rules regarding a thesis, organization, quotations, style and clarity, formatting, plagiarism, citations, and documentation will be penalized. See your instructor for details.

Thesis: With the exception of book reviews and critical essays, all history papers must have a clear thesis (argument, central focus, main point, etc.). That thesis should be stated somewhere early in your paper, and be specific, significant, and contestable.

Organization: Divide your paper into logical paragraphs, with a topic sentence at or near the beginning of each paragraph. Paragraphs should be longer than one sentence and shorter than one page. Each good paragraph should have: 1) some form of transition from the previous paragraph; 2) a key (topic) sentence, summarizing the contents of the paragraph; 3) evidence supporting that argument. Each paragraph should contribute a piece of the argument in support of your thesis.

Quotations: When appropriate, integrate quotations into your text. Don't simply insert a quoted sentence; rather, introduce the quote, taking the time to tell the reader what to look for and integrating it into the text. Use your quotations to highlight or illustrate a particular point, an especially effective contemporary reaction or description, a derogatory remark that some contemporary made that reflects the sentiment of the times, or a well-written thesis. Make sure to explain the significance of the quotation for whatever point, or theme, you are trying to make. Do not quote because you are simply too lazy to rewrite something, and never use a quotation simply to convey factual information. Use quotes sparingly; when in doubt, see your instructor.

Names: The first time you mention a person, give the full name (e.g., "Henry Ward Beecher," rather than simply "Henry" or "Beecher"). Do not refer to women by their first names only unless you also do so for men.

Style and clarity: Historians must communicate well. When in doubt, strive for clarity. Your sentences should say what you want them to say. Define any specialized language that you use (i.e., ideology, totalitarianism, liberalism, epistemology, etc.). You must also insure that your essay meets university-level standards of grammar, spelling, proofreading, etc. Papers which are not in accord with these standards will be assessed a lower grade.

Format: Double-space all text, using 12 point font, with page numbers on every page. If you use a title page, don't number it, and begin your text with page 1. Papers which do not follow the proper formatting guidelines will be penalized.

II. Avoiding Plagiarism

Always give credit where credit is due. Plagiarism involves the uncredited use—whether intentional or unintentional—of someone else’s words or ideas. This is a serious academic offense, with punishments ranging from a grade of zero on the assignment to failure in the course and a letter placed in your permanent file. This includes work that you have submitted, are submitting, or will submit to more than one class (you cannot receive credit for substantially the same work in more than one class!). All direct quotations must be placed in quotation marks, and proper credit for quotations, as well as paraphrased ideas or information, must be given in footnotes or endnotes. Papers guilty of any form of plagiarism will be severely penalized (see individual course syllabus or guidelines). For University rules on academic integrity and honesty, see pp. 39-40 of the University catalog: <http://catalog.tamucc.edu/catalog09/undergraduate/gen1.pdf>

III. Primary and Secondary Sources

Historians divide sources into two basic types:

1. Primary sources were compiled by people who lived during the events in question. They consist of letters, diaries, instructor-approved oral interviews, reminiscences, and contemporary newspaper accounts, government reports, laws, speeches, photographs, recordings, and the like. Thus a magazine article written in 1941 about U.S.-Japanese tensions would be considered a primary source in a paper about the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, but a history of the attack written for that same magazine in 2001 would not. Some classes may require approval for internet primary sources; when in doubt, always check with your instructor.

2. Secondary sources are written by someone who did not live during the events in question. Typically, they include scholarly books, articles, and book reviews. Even if a historian uses an impressive number of primary sources in studying some past event, what that historian writes is still considered to be a secondary source. In doing papers for the history area, rely on secondary sources that are *academic* in nature. These have been subjected to a rigorous peer-review, and include essays written in scholarly journals and books published by university presses (and, in some cases, major publishing houses approved by your instructor). Wikipedia and Dictionary.com, for example, are not academic sources. When in doubt, always check with your instructor.

IV. Types of Research Papers

You will write two types of research papers in your upper-division and graduate history courses at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. Good historians must be able to do both.

1. *Historiographical papers* (sometimes referred to as literature reviews) examine the ways in which previous historians have dealt with a historical topic. The best historiographies mix an analysis of the methodological or theoretical approaches that scholars have used in writing about that topic, with a discussion of what historians have said about that subject, and how their work has changed over time. Recognizing that historians are influenced by the ideas and events of the times in which they live, such papers also attempt to identify and account for this bias. In writing such a paper, you must be specific in identifying and explaining the relevant methodologies, theoretical approaches, and works of leading authors in the field. Make sure to avoid a common

error: do not simply say that an author writes about a certain subject; rather, focus your attention on identifying and explaining that author's argument (thesis). The great majority of sources in a historiographical paper will be secondary.

2. *Primary source-based papers* allow you to develop your own narrative about a particular subject, basing your evidence and interpretation largely on research gleaned from primary sources. You will still need to use secondary sources to help frame your argument and provide historical context—that is, to show how your argument fits into the historical literature—but you must base the bulk of your text upon information and insights that come from your examination of primary materials.

V. Documentation for Research Papers

1. Historians use notes and bibliographies to give proper attribution to the sources of their information and ideas. This allows others to verify a work's accuracy as well as to follow up on particular ideas and themes described in the paper.

2. For all citations in upper-division and graduate-level papers, the history area uses the “notes-bibliography style” described in chapters 16-17 in Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*, revised by Wayne C. Booth, et. al. (7th edition). These sorts of things might at first glance seem pretty arcane, but following such instructions is an important academic convention for our discipline. Students who do not follow this format—even if it simply means that you have presented a citation using an incorrect format—will have points deducted from their grade. Copies of Turabian are available under “History Area Citations” in the Reserve Collection of the Bell Library.

3. Never use parenthetical citations in a research paper for an upper-division or graduate level History class.

4. Always give credit where credit is due.

VI. Footnotes/endnotes in Research Papers

General Guidelines

1. Consult your professor for their preference in using either footnotes (placed at the foot, or bottom, of the page) or endnotes (at the end of the text). Don't mix footnotes and endnotes.

2. You must cite your source even when summarizing (e.g, paraphrasing or borrowing ideas).

3. Notes have several uses. Most commonly, they tell the reader where you got your information. But they may also serve other purposes—most notably providing additional elaboration on issues that would take away from the flow of the text, and acknowledging the assistance or guidance of others.

4. In general, include a note for any information that is not common knowledge (i.e., you do not need to give a citation if you say that George Washington was the first president of the United States, but you probably do need to provide one if you say that George Washington's farewell message to congress included an admonition that the nation avoid entangling foreign alliances).

5. Notes are numbered consecutively (use arabic numerals rather than letters or Roman numerals), beginning with 1. Place the numbers at the end of a sentence to avoid

interrupting the flow of the text.

6. Check with your professor before using “ibid” (short for “ibidem,” or “in the same place”). Never use “loc cit.,” “op cit.,” or “idem.”

7. The first time a source is mentioned in a note, give the full citation, including the exact page numbers used. Subsequent references to that source should be in shortened form. For examples, see Turabian.

8. When you have several different sources in the same note, separate those sources with a semi-colon.

9. The first line of each note is indented several spaces (like a paragraph).

Sample Primary Sources (Notes)

Newspaper article:

1. “Congressional Debates,” *Connecticut Courant* (Hartford), February 10, 1800, in the Archives of Americana Data Base, http://0-infoweb.newsbank.com.portal.tamucc.edu/iw-search/we/HistArchive/HistArchive?d_viewref=doc&p_docnum=-1&p_nbid=I47X47GBMTI0MTUyODk4Mi42MTM0MjI6MToxMjoxNjUuOTUuMi4xMzk&f_docref=v2:1080E0D856AD30E8@EANX-10865CA4A03C5D78@2378537-10865CA9DFDE6AB0@0&p_docref=v2:1080E0D856AD30E8@EANX-10865CA4A03C5D78@2378537-10865CA9DFDE6AB0@0 (accessed May 5, 2009).

Letter from published collection:

2. Marquis de Lafayette to Alexander Hamilton, October 15, 1787, in *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, ed. Harold C. Syrett (Columbia: University of Columbia Press, 1962), 282-83.

Letter from manuscript collection:

3. Hector García to Patrick Carroll, October 23, 1988, box 221, Hector P. García Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Mary and Jeff Bell Library, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.

Contemporary magazine article:

4. Nelson A. Miles, “Our Unwatered Empire,” *North American Review* 150 (March 1890): 376-77.

Book:

5. Mary Leefe Lawrence, *Daughter of the Regiment: Memoirs of a Childhood in the Frontier Army, 1878-1898*, ed. Thomas T. Smith (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 133.

Oral interview with author:

6. Andrew Macmillan, interview by author, San Diego, CA, March 2, 2007.

Sample Secondary Sources (Notes)

Book – single author:

7. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (New York: Vintage Books, 1957), 122-23.

Edited book:

8. Chester V. Kielman, ed. *The University of Texas Archives: A Guide to the Historical Manuscripts Collections of the University of Texas Library* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1967), 220.

Article in edited volume where author is listed:

9. Donald E. Chipman, "In Search of Cabeza De Vaca's Route across Texas: An Historiographical Survey," in *Texas Vistas*, edited by Ralph A. Wooster, Robert A. Calvert, and Adrian Anderson (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 2006), 13-17.

Journal Article:

10. Michael Kwass, "Big Hair: A Wig History of Consumption in Eighteenth-Century France," *The American Historical Review* 111 (June 2006): 631-33.

Journal article online:

11. Michael Kwass, "Big Hair: A Wig History of Consumption in Eighteenth-Century France," *The American Historical Review* 111 (June 2006).

<http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/ahr/111.3/kwass.html> (accessed May 4, 2009).

VII. Bibliographies for Research Papers

General Guidelines

1. Divide your bibliography into Primary Sources and Secondary Sources. Each subentry should then be arranged alphabetically by the last name of the author. Unless you are writing a particularly extensive research paper with more than 20 sources, do not use additional subentries.

2. Your bibliography must include every source that you use. As per Turabian, you may include works that influenced your thinking, but that were not specifically cited in your paper.

Sample Primary Sources (Bibliographies)

Several newspaper articles, same newspaper:

Note: although Turabian suggests that newspapers can be omitted from a bibliography (pp. 186-87), the History Area faculty policy is that they must be included.

Connecticut Courant (Hartford), 1798-1802. Archives of Americana Data Base, Mary and Jeff Bell Library, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.

Contemporary magazine article:

Miles, Nelson A. "Our Unwatered Empire." *North American Review* 150 (March 1890): 370-81.

Manuscript collection:

Garcia, Hector P. Papers. Special Collections and Archives, Mary and Jeff Bell Library, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.

Book:

Lane, Lydia Spencer. *I Married a Soldier: or, Old Days in the Old Army*. Albuquerque, NM: Horn and Wallace, 1964.

Collection of published papers:

U. S. War Department. *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*. 128 vols. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901.

Oral history collection:

Pickle, J. J. ("Jake"). Oral Interviews. Lyndon Baines Johnson Library, Austin, Texas.

Sample Secondary Sources (Bibliographies)

Book:

Faust, Drew Gilpin. *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008.

Edited book:

Kielman, Chester V., ed. *The University of Texas Archives: A Guide to the Historical Manuscripts Collections of the University of Texas Library*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1967.

Article in edited volume where author is listed:

Chipman, Donald E. "In Search of Cabeza De Vaca's Route across Texas: An Historiographical Survey." In *Texas Vistas*, edited by Ralph A. Wooster, Robert A. Calvert, and Adrian Anderson, 1-21. Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 2006.

Journal Article:

Kwass, Michael. "Big Hair: A Wig History of Consumption in Eighteenth-Century France." *The American Historical Review* 111 (June 2006): 631-59.

Journal article online:

Kwass, Michael. "Big Hair: A Wig History of Consumption in Eighteenth-Century France." *The American Historical Review* 111 (June 2006).
<http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/ahr/111.3/kwass.html> (accessed May 4, 2009).

For general matters of internet citations, see "Using Chicago Style to Cite and Document Sources," *Online! A Reference Guide to Using Internet Sources*, 2003 update.

<http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/online/cite7.html> (accessed May 4, 2009).

¹ Based on “Style Sheet,” University of Wisconsin Eau-Clair History, <http://www.uwec.edu/History/stylesheet.htm> (accessed May 3, 2009); “Citation Style Sheet,” University of Maryland-Baltimore County Department of History, <http://www.umbc.edu/history/students/style.html> (accessed May 3, 2009); and Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*, 7th ed.. Revised Wayne C. Booth, et. al. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).