

Second Assignment: Research Paper

This assignment is at once simple and complex. You will need to

- select an issue or topic from American history through 1877;
- locate primary source materials on this topic;
- locate secondary sources about the topic;
- craft an interesting argument;
- write a thoughtful, well-argued, and carefully researched paper.

You are required to use primary sources for this paper—that is, you should be finding texts, photos, and/or artifacts from the era under consideration. You should also refer to secondary sources to discover how scholars have interpreted these primary sources and analyzed these issues.

We will talk in class about how to balance the use of primary and secondary sources. The ratio of primary to secondary sources will vary by paper topic, but you should be looking at several primary sources as you develop your argument and your paper.

As always, I will be available to assist you during my office hours and by appointment. Please let me help you write a strong paper.

Length: At least 6, but not more than 10, double-spaced pages.

Deadlines

Research question due date: Print copy due **Monday, November 4** at the beginning of class. Your research question should be

- an actual question to which you don't already know the answer;
- one to which the answer would be a non-obvious argument;
- answerable through reference to, and analysis of, primary source documents.

I will provide feedback on your topic within one week. You are welcome to submit your research question before the deadline, and I'll try my best to provide feedback earlier.

Paper due date: Print copy due **Wednesday, December 11** at the beginning of class. You are, of course, welcome to turn in your paper early, but **I will not be accepting late papers** because the deadline is at the end of the semester.