

21H.S01: Food in American History
Research Paper Assignment

PART II: Final Paper

Due: Last session.

Length: 12-15 pages, *plus* bibliography.

Required: *At least* 5 secondary sources and 2 primary sources

PART III: Oral Presentation

Prepare a 10-15 minute oral presentation about your research on the last day of class.

(Your presentation is mandatory but will not be graded.)

Writing the Final Research Paper:

In the next stages of working on this paper, you may need to find more material, but you should shift emphasis to analyzing your material, building an argument, organizing your material to support your argument, and writing the paper. You will likely need to revisit and perhaps modify your research question as you read through your sources. Just as in scientific experiments, it is always a mistake to cling to the historical question you originally formulated if your sources will not allow you to answer it; instead, you should revise the question and/or answer to it in light of your findings. In addition, consider what work you may need to do in light of the feedback you received from me on your proposal.

As you may have already experienced, writing is a laborious process. Moving on from your research proposal, you should begin to work out your further thoughts about your research on paper, *not just in your head*. By Session 10, you should have located and obtained all the major sources you will use for your paper. By this time, you should also begin to outline and draft your final paper. By Session 12, you should shift your focus away from further research and decisively toward the writing process.

Making a Bibliography

Your final bibliography may, indeed, be somewhat different from the bibliography you submitted with your proposal. Changes in the range of your sources should reflect the ways in which further research, analysis, and writing have shaped your developing understanding of the plausible answers to your research question.

Your bibliography should have **separate lists** for primary and secondary sources and provide **full bibliographic information in Chicago style**:

<http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org.libproxy.mit.edu/home.html>

Grading:

40% Content: Is this paper well-researched, fully-cited, & informative?

30% Analysis: How successfully did this paper formulate and answer a research question related to food in American history? Was the thesis coherent and cogently defended?

20% Organization: Is the paper structured so that content and analysis flow in a logical, readable succession of sentences and paragraphs?

10% Style: Is the writing clear? Is the word choice precise? Is it largely free of basic errors?

Don't forget to proofread before submitting your final paper!

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