

Core 8 Research Paper Assignment

Winter 2010 (Term 092)

All Core 8 students are required to write a research paper as part of the requirements for the course. While the particulars of topic and due date will be left to individual instructors, the following information will hold true across sections.

The Purpose of the Assignment

This assignment gives you the opportunity to explore in-depth a topic related in some way to Latin America, either a topic inspired by our regular curriculum, or perhaps one that falls outside of what that curriculum covers. Your instructor will provide you with further instructions about topic choice for this assignment.

This paper will be thesis-based. A thesis is the central argument being made in the paper, usually encapsulated in the opening paragraph in the form of a thesis statement. The Writing Tutorial Services at Indiana University defines a thesis statement as “a one- or two-sentence condensation of the argument or analysis that is to follow.” It allows you to “test your ideas by distilling them into a sentence or two, better organize and develop your argument, [and] provide your reader with a ‘guide’ to your argument” (www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/thesis_statement.shtml). Check out IU’s site for lots of helpful information about how to come up with a good thesis. The Online Writing Lab (OWL) at Purdue also has a helpful page on establishing arguments (owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/588/01).

Evaluation of the Assignment

Please consult the Research Paper Rubric in this syllabus to obtain the criteria upon which your instructor will evaluate your work. Please talk with your instructor if you have any questions about any of these criteria. Please consider the SJC Writing Clinic as a place where you can also go to obtain some advice on your writing. The Writing Clinic office is on the second floor of the Core Building, Room 212. For assistance from the Clinic, please call 866-6138, or sign up for an appointment time at the office.

Technical Matters

- The paper must be a minimum of eight text pages, in addition to the bibliography and any other supplementary material/pages required by your instructor.
- A minimum of eight sources must be actively cited in the body of the paper.
- At least six of your eight required sources must include peer-reviewed journal articles, books, magazine articles and/or newspaper articles.
- Individual instructors may set margin, font, page numbering/word count, and other technical requirements for students in their section(s).
- The paper must be double-spaced, except where The Everyday Writer indicates that other spacing is appropriate.
- Your paper must include a Bibliography or Works Cited page listing all of the sources you have used.
- Your Bibliography/Works Cited page must employ the MLA, APA or Chicago style and follow that style consistently. Your instructor may specify the style you should use.

Our writing guide for the course is Andrea Lunsford’s The Everyday Writer. Besides having useful information about writing content and mechanics, this source describes how to properly cite sources in a variety of formats. Your instructor will make arrangements with you regarding the edition you are to use.

A Note About Plagiarism

Please be familiar with what constitutes plagiarism. When you take another author’s words verbatim, you must put quotation marks around the direct quote, followed by a citation to the source. However, even when you just take the ideas of other authors and paraphrase them in your own words, you must still cite the source(s) from which those ideas came.

In order to avoid plagiarism, you should work hard at learning to paraphrase ideas in your own words. This is surely one of the most important skills that a student can develop. Please check The Everyday Writer for information on paraphrasing and avoiding plagiarism. The Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) also has a good page on the importance of paraphrasing and how to develop it as a skill (owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/619/01).