

Final Paper on Comparative Topic

Due dates:

Preliminary Comparative Research Ideas Due: Wed. 3/6

Preliminary Paper Proposal and Oral Presentation Due: Wed., 3/27

Revised and Expanded Research Proposal and Oral Presentation Due: Mon., 4/15

Final paper & 10-minute Oral Research Presentation Due: Mon., 5/6, 1:00-3:00 p.m.
(Final exam session)

- Visual aids such as PowerPoint are encouraged for oral presentation.
- Hard copy due in class (12-20 pages including bibliography, double-spaced in a 12-point font).
- Electronic Copy submitted to the D2L Assignment Folder.

Write a comparative research paper on a historical topic. Choose contemporary institutions, ideas, or issues—that existed in two parts of one country, two different countries, or two world regions—that can feasibly be compared and contrasted in 12 to 20 pages. For example, you could compare eighteenth-century slave plantations in one Brazilian region and one American colony, opium consumption in nineteenth-century South China and Britain, or soup kitchens during the Depression of the 1930s in Detroit and Atlanta. Avoid topics that are too broad thematically or chronologically, such as the history of democracy in India and Britain, or imperialism in the Roman and Russian empires.

You are welcome to develop this paper from one that you have written for another class. For example, if you wrote a paper on the slave trade in the U.S., you may integrate appropriate sections into a comparative paper on slavery. Although you are encouraged to build upon work done in other courses, your paper for this course should be a new effort.

Ideally, the comparison will encourage you to engage in “inventive thinking that moves...beyond..familiar terrain” (Levine, p. 331). A good comparative analysis will systematically examine the key similarities and differences and consider factors that might explain them. Your paper should have a clear introduction with a thesis explaining the key similarities and differences. The body should present evidence in a well-organized, comparative manner to defend your thesis. The conclusion should summarize key evidence and arguments supporting your thesis.

A good thesis EXPLAINS evidence. Perhaps the best way to develop a thesis is to ask yourself a research question based on your preliminary knowledge of a topic. For example: “Why was opium addiction more prevalent in nineteenth century China than Britain?” Based on research into the similarities and differences, your ANSWER to the question becomes your THESIS.

You are **REQUIRED** to meet the following deadlines:

Wed. 3/6: Attend a Presentation on Comparative Research (Library Room 134):

Laptops available, bring your own laptop if you have one.

Wed., 3/27: Research Proposal (3-5 pages, double-spaced) and Oral Presentation

- **Research proposal (1 page)** of the comparative paper topic summarizing the results of research to date. Discuss potential **feasibility** of the comparative research topic, any **key similarities and differences**, preliminary **research question and thesis** explaining similarities and differences, any problems finding **sources**, and plans to continue research.
- **Annotated bibliography in Chicago A or B style (2-4 pages)**: Provide 3-5 sources on each side of the comparison (6-10 sources total). Each source citation should have a short annotation (2-3 sentences) describing the article or book and explaining why it is relevant to the comparative research project.
- Give a **10-minute oral research presentation** that explains the content of your hardcopy. Classmates will have 5 minutes to ask questions and provide feedback.

Mon., 4/15: Revised and Expanded Research Proposal (4-6 pages, double-spaced) and Oral Presentation

- **4-6 page expanded research proposal** that includes a **research question and thesis**, summary of findings of **key similarities and differences**, **problems encountered in research**, and **annotated bibliography** in Chicago A or B style with 6-10 sources on each side of the comparison (12-20 sources total)
- Give a **10-minute oral research update** that explains the content of your hardcopy. Classmates will have 5 minutes to ask questions and provide feedback.

Mon., 5/6, 1:00-3:00 p.m. Final Paper and Oral Presentations (Final exam session)

Oral Research Presentation: 10-minutes plus 5 minutes of questions

- 80% of the grade will be based on how effectively you explain your thesis and present key points of evidence to defend it. The other 20% will be based upon clarity of expression (10%) and organization (10%).
- **Extra credit (Up to 5 points each)**
 1. **Visual aids** such as PowerPoint will be awarded. (Submit PowerPoint file to me via email attachment by 15 minutes before class. Bring backup copy to class on USB memory stick.)
 2. **Answering questions** well.

Paper Length and Evaluation: 12-20 pages including bibliography, double-spaced in a 12-point font. 80% of the grade will be based on how effectively the content of the paper defends your thesis. The other 20% will be based upon grammar (4%), spelling, punctuation, and capitalization (4%), organization (4%), readability (4%), and citations and bibliography (4%). The paper must be turned in electronically to D2L to verify that it is not plagiarized or written with Artificial Intelligence. **Evidence of plagiarism or artificial intelligence will result in a grade of "F" for the course.**

Final Oral Presentation Grading Sheet

Grade: _____

Start time _____

End time _____ (10 minutes maximum)

I. Content (80%): _____

A. Comparative research topic and thesis are clearly introduced.

___Excellent ___Good ___Fair ___Poor

B. Comparative analysis is clearly presented: **Key** similarities and differences between your two cases are explained.

___Excellent ___Good ___Fair ___Poor

C. Thesis is **persuasively** supported by your discussion of comparative evidence.

___Excellent ___Good ___Fair ___Poor

D. A conclusion succinctly summarizes why the evidence supports your thesis.

___Excellent ___Good ___Fair ___Poor

II. Style (20%) _____

A. Oral expression is clear.

___Excellent ___Good ___Fair ___Poor

B. Oral expression is well organized.

___Excellent ___Good ___Fair ___Poor

III. Extra credit

Visual (1-5 points) _____

Visual aids, such as PowerPoint, coordinate well with talk. (Submit PowerPoint file to me via email attachment by 15 minutes before class. Bring backup copy to class on USB memory stick.)

Oral (1-5 points) _____

Relevant questions are answered well. (Limit your presentation to 10 minutes to leave time for questions. If you run over your time limit, you will not be eligible for this extra credit.)